

**NEW YORK GATEWAY
CONNECTIONS IMPROVEMENT PROJECT
TO THE US PEACE BRIDGE PLAZA**

**Final Design Report/Environmental
Impact Statement**

Final Section 4(f) Evaluation (49 USC 303)

**APPENDIX I – VISUAL IMPACT
ASSESSMENT**

**PIN 5760.80
City of Buffalo
Erie County, New York**

April 4, 2014



U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration



New York State
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1 INTRODUCTION

Parsons was retained by the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) to prepare a Visual Impact Assessment (VIA) for the proposed gateway connections improvements to the U.S. Peace Bridge Plaza located in the City of Buffalo, New York, four miles east of Fort Erie, Ontario, Canada (refer to Figure 1). Parsons is the lead consultant for the schematic design, final design, and construction support services retained by NYSDOT.

This VIA was prepared under the direct guidance of a registered landscape architect experienced in the preparation of visual impact assessments. It is also consistent with the policies, procedures, and guidelines contained in established visual impact assessment methodologies (refer to Section 1.5).

1.1 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed project comprises the construction of new ramps to provide direct access from the U.S. Peace Bridge Plaza (Plaza) to northbound I-190, redirect traffic from Front Park, and the removal of Baird Drive. Specifically, the project includes the construction of the following:

- A new ramp (Ramp D), providing direct access from the Plaza to northbound I-190;
- A new ramp (Ramp PN), providing access from Porter Avenue to the existing northbound I-190 exit ramp (Ramp N/ Ramp A) to the Plaza, including a roundabout or signalized intersection at Porter Avenue;
- Removal of Baird Drive, including the conversion of the existing roadbed into additional green space; and,
- Modification to various roads, ramps, signage, and lighting in the vicinity of the Plaza, including the Shoreline Trail along the waterfront.

The proposed improvements will be constructed on the existing land currently occupied by the Plaza and city streets. The project addresses the limited direct access between the Plaza and I-190 by providing new and enhanced direct connections thereby, reducing the volume of regional and international traffic using the local street system.

1.2 PROJECT LOCATION

The NY Gateway Connections project is located in the West Side neighborhood of the City of Buffalo, Erie County, New York (refer to Figure 1). The project area is adjacent to Front Park, which was designed by Frederick Law Olmsted as part of a citywide park and parkway system opened in 1868, and includes a small portion of the park (the existing Baird Drive). Major roadways in the project area include Niagara Thruway (I-190), Porter Avenue, Baird Drive, Busti Avenue, and the I-190 (Niagara Thruway) ramp connections to and from the Plaza (refer to Figure 2).



Regional Map

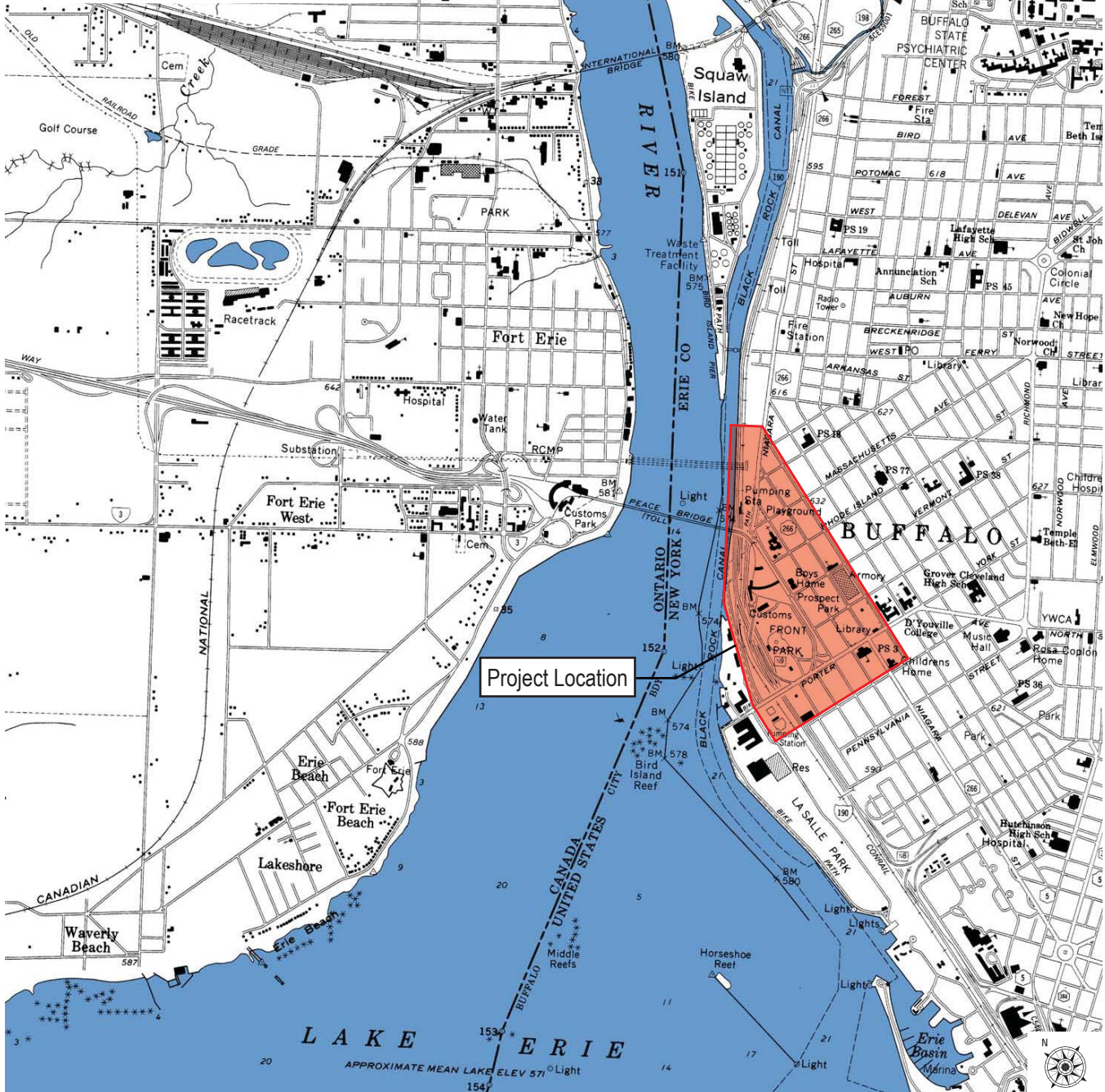


Figure 1: Project Location Map

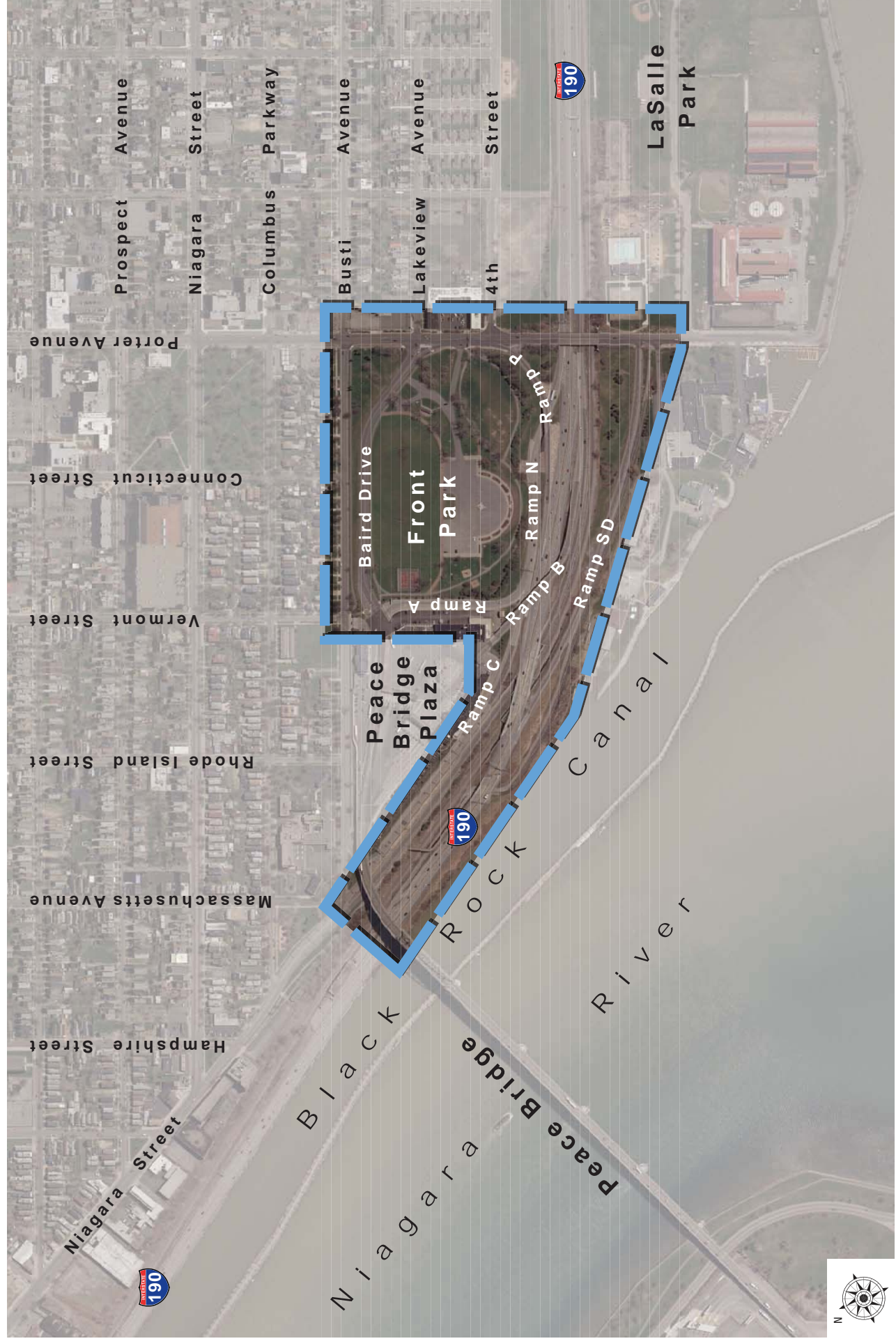


Figure 2: General Project Area Map



1.3 PROJECT PURPOSE AND NEED

The purpose of this project is to reduce the use of the local streets by interstate traffic (autos and trucks) and to provide access to the existing Plaza at its current location.

The primary need of the project is to address the limited direct access between the Plaza and Interstate 190. Existing direct access is limited and requires regional and international traffic to use the local street system. This limited access adds additional commercial traffic to the local streets which were originally designed to only meet the needs of local traffic.

Preliminary analyses indicate that most traffic to and from the Plaza originates from or is destined to I-190. Though it varies by time of day, approximately 20 percent of cars and 10 percent of trucks that are destined to Canada must exit southbound I-190 at Porter Avenue and travel the local streets (Porter Avenue and Baird Drive through Front Park) to the Plaza. Similarly, 18 percent of cars and 6 percent of trucks exiting the Plaza must travel along the local streets (Baird Drive through Front Park and then Porter Avenue) to access northbound I-190. As a result of these conditions, as many as 228 interstate vehicles, including 27 trucks, use Porter Avenue between the interstate highway and Baird Drive during the peak hour, which constitutes approximately 15 percent of all traffic on the local-street segment.

1.4 PROJECT ALTERNATIVES

Based on the project need, purpose, and objectives, the following alternatives have been developed for study. The Build Alternative and Sub-Alternative have been carried forward for evaluation as part of this VIA.

1.4.1 No-Build Alternative

The No-Build Alternative assumes no improvements in the project area other than those planned by others or implemented as part of routine maintenance. Although the No-Build Alternative does not meet the project's purpose and need, NEPA requires that it be evaluated in the EIS. The No-Build Alternative also serves as the baseline condition against which the potential benefits and impacts of the Build Alternative are evaluated.

1.4.2 Build Alternative

The Build Alternative would construct a new on-ramp (Ramp D), providing direct access from the Plaza to northbound I-190. It would also construct a new ramp (Ramp PN) from Porter Avenue to the existing I-190 northbound off-ramp (Ramp N) to the Plaza (refer to Figure 3). The combination of these new ramps will allow removal of Baird Drive and conversion of the existing roadbed into additional Front Park green space. With the removal of Baird Drive, 4.5 acres of green space located between Busti Avenue and Baird Drive would be reconnected to the greater park area. This alternative would require modifications to the Massachusetts Pumping Station access road, the Shoreline Trail bicycle/pedestrian facility along the waterfront, and several existing I-190 ramps in the vicinity of the Plaza, as well as new signing approaching and within the Plaza to clearly direct vehicles to the appropriate ramps and routes. To accommodate the new Ramp PN at Porter Avenue and the existing adjacent I-190 northbound on-ramp (Ramp P), Porter Avenue would be modified to include a roundabout or signalized intersection (refer to Figure 3 and Figure 4). Modifications along Porter Avenue may include removal and replacement of the bridge over the I-190, if needed, to complete the Ramp P intersection improvements.



Key

Existing roadway network

Proposed roadway network

Existing roadway network to be removed

Figure 3: Proposed Roadway Network with Porter Avenue Roundabout



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Key

Existing roadway network

Proposed roadway network [] Existing roadway network to be removed



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Figure 4: Proposed Roadway Network with Porter Avenue Intersection



1.5 METHODOLOGY

The evaluation of existing aesthetic resources in the landscape requires the application of a process that seeks to objectively identify the visual features, or resources, of the landscape; assesses the character and quality of those resources relative to overall regional visual character, and identifies the importance to people, or sensitivity, of views of visual resources in the landscape. With this preliminary establishment of the baseline (existing) conditions, a proposed project or another change to the landscape can be systematically evaluated for its degree of impact. The degree of impact depends on both the magnitude of change in the visual resource (i.e., visual character and quality) and viewers' responses to and concern for those changes. This general process is similar for all established federal procedures for visual assessment (Smardon, et al. 1986) and represents a suitable method for visual assessment for other projects and areas.

Guidelines in FHWA's Visual Impact Assessment for Highway Projects, Publication No. FHWA-HI-88-054 (March 1988) and NYSDEC's Assessing and Mitigating Visual Impacts Policy, Publication No. DEP-00-2 (July 2000) were referenced to organize this study. The manuals provide a methodology to characterize the visual quality of existing resources, analyze the proposed project effect on these resources, and predict the degradation or improvement of this visual quality and the viewers' response (refer to the Glossary for definitions of common terms used).

Generally, the visual impact assessment for the gateway connections followed these steps:

- Define the existing visual resources and landscape units of the study area (refer to Figure 5);
- Identify the project viewer groups and their typical viewpoint locations that are likely to be affected by the proposed project;
- Identify community goals for visual quality;
- Identify the visual quality of viewsheds from project study area landscape units (refer to Figure 10);
- Evaluate whether the proposed project will degrade the visual quality of visual resources viewed by viewer groups. Review design drawings and photo simulations of the proposed project from key view locations to help predict the project's effect;
- Predict viewer response to changes in visual quality; and,
- Propose strategies that may be considered to mitigate adverse effects.



Figure 5: Study Area Map



1.5.1 Methodology Preparation

Before field surveys were conducted, the project landscape architect met with project engineers to discuss the proposed design and the visible changes it may cause to the existing environment. City land use plans were reviewed for community goals or policies concerning visual resources. The City of Buffalo's Comprehensive Plan and Draft Buffalo Green Code provided this information (refer to Section 2.4).

1.5.2 Field Visits

Visibility of the gateway connections were evaluated in the field by car and on foot during daylight hours on August 21st and 23rd, 2013 during summer conditions with full foliage conditions to observe the project setting and identify the existing visual character. Public roads were travelled and vantage points were visited within the study area to document from where the gateway connections can or cannot be seen. Photos were taken from fifty-two viewpoints (refer to Figure 6 and Attachment B). Viewpoints were collected using a global positioning system (GPS) built into the digital camera (Nikon CoolPix S9300) and noted on field maps. The GPS information was later electronically transferred to a DTM to be used in the development of the photo simulations.

1.5.3 Photosimulations

A three-dimensional model (3d Model) and point source photo simulation is used to illustrate proposed conditions on the existing environment. A computer 3d model is created for the design alternative that showed the roadway and plaza improvements along with the proposed buildings. The GPS data for the photos collected during the field visits is then transferred to the 3d Model. Utilizing the GPS data, including the camera's height and angle, and the 3d Model, a three-dimensional rendering (3d Rendering) of the proposed conditions is created. The last step takes the 3d Rendering and merges it with the digital photo illustrating the proposed conditions on the existing landscape.



Figure 6: Existing Photo Locations



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2 VISUAL ENVIRONMENT

Identification of the regional landscape provides a frame of reference for the inventory and evaluation of the visual resources. The regional landscape covers a broad area in which land uses, landform, and natural resources describes an overall visual character that will assist in comparing the visual effects of the project and determine the significance of these effects.

2.1 REGIONAL LANDSCAPE

The New York Gateway Connections Improvement Project (NYGCIP) is situated in Erie County along the eastern shore of the Niagara River in the City of Buffalo, New York. The following describes the natural environment found within the County and City in which the NYGCIP is located.

2.1.1 Landform

The NYGCIP is south of the Onondaga Formation, which is a group of hard limestones and dolostones of Devonian age that may be characterized by relatively flat uniform topography broken up occasionally by low-lying ridges. The project site and surrounding city area sits atop a bluff which is uniformly flat overlooking the head of the Niagara River and Lake Erie along the western border. The bluff's western edge slopes downward towards the Black Rock Canal and Niagara River. Man-made landforms, roadway and bridge embankments, are located on the southern and western edges of the NYGCIP. These landforms are utilized for the Peace Bridge, local road and ramp access for the area's transportation network.

Adjacent to the project site atop the bluff sits the historic Front Park, which was a key part of the nation's first park and parkway system designed by Frederick Law Olmsted in 1868. A large play area is located adjacent to Busti Avenue with a formal space, referred to as "the Terrace", located at the edge of the bluff (refer to Figure 7).



Figure 7: Front Park



2.1.2 Vegetation

Minimal vegetation exists within the study area, with the primary concentration within Front Park. The remaining vegetation is scattered within heavily paved transportation corridors and built structures. Front Park's vegetation consists of mature trees and thick plantations along the bluff to screen the transportation and railroad corridors below (refer to Figure 7). Pockets of vegetation line the abutments of the Porter Avenue bridge over Interstate 190 in addition to vegetation along the shoreline.

Vegetation within the residential areas is primarily comprised of large mature street trees and landscaped backyards which provide limited views of the NYGCIP. Busti Avenue, along the east side, consists of Linden, Maple and London Planetree, while Porter Avenue, an Olmsted Parkway, consists of a variety of hybrid Elms, which is consistent with the vegetation communities found within Front Park. Front Park includes Spruce, Pine, Oak, Yellow Wood, Maple, Catalpa, Linden, Ash, Honey Locust, Elm, and Tulip Trees.

2.1.3 Land Use

Existing land use in the area can be defined as urban center, urban neighborhood, retail, campus, industrial, open space and transportation corridor as illustrated in Figure 8. Transportation corridor and open space dominate the project area. The urban neighborhood, with its single family detached housing, cover the northeast region of the study area while retail and open space borders along the south. To the west, open space and campus line the shoreline of the Black Rock Canal with the transportation corridor covering a small section of the shoreline. A small section of industrial is to the north, just beyond the Peace Bridge connection to the Plaza.

The City of Buffalo's Draft Green Code identifies this area as part of the City's West Planning Area. Future plans for this area are to maintain the current land uses within the study area.



Figure 8: Land Use Map

2.2 LANDSCAPE UNITS

To provide a framework for comparing the visual effects of the project, the regional landscape is divided into distinct landscape units. Based on the following, five distinct landscape units can be defined within the study area (refer to Figure 10).

- Landform: The topographical features of the study area and the uniqueness of the form, pattern and edge identification.
- Vegetation: The type and magnitude of vegetative cover within the study area.
- Color: The elements of visual pattern on the surrounding project element of soil, vegetation and landforms.
- Man-Made Development: The type and magnitude of structures within the study area and the level of contrast with its natural surroundings.

The units' visual character, use and views to the LPOE are described in the following sections.

2.2.1 Urban Residential

The Urban Residential landscape unit is primarily located along the northeast section of the study area. The single family residences are situated on flat low-lying topography. The streets are laid in a grid pattern with access to the residential blocks from Busti Avenue and various side streets. Residences consist primarily of 1-2 story wood-frame structures with varying architectural styles, minimally set back from the streets. Residential streets are lined with mature trees with front yards consisting of ornamental landscapes within the residential developments providing varying color, texture and patterns. Open views to the NYGCIP are limited to residences along Busti Avenue to the northeast and from the backyards of the residences along Columbus Parkway. Front Park provides a natural buffer for a portion of the residences along Busti Avenue while the Peace Bridge Plaza, including Duty Free, toll plazas and other structures, screen views from the residences to the north of the park.



Figure 9: Urban Residential Neighborhood

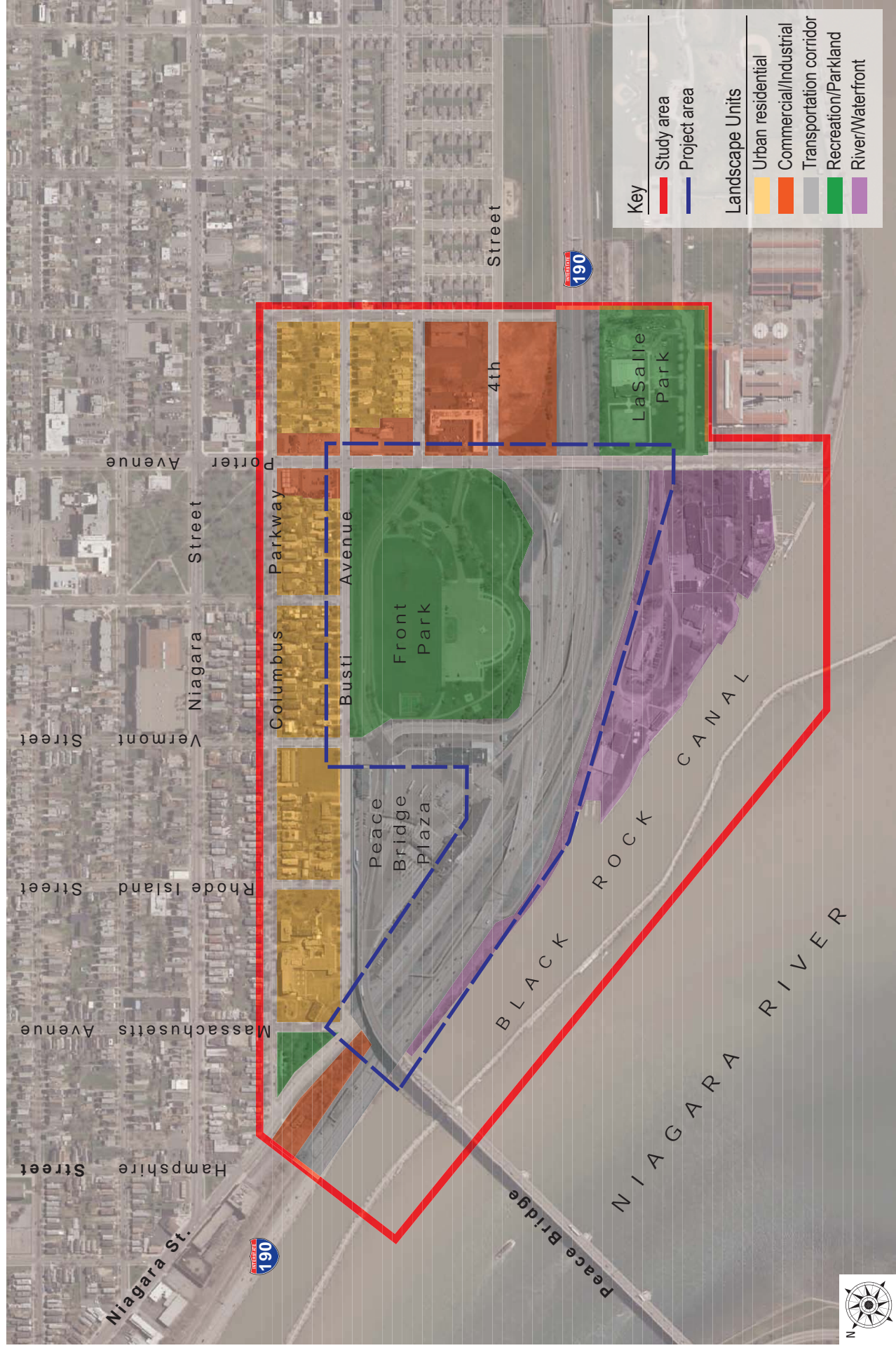


Figure 10: Landscape Units Map

2.2.2 Commercial / Industrial

This unit is comprised of a small retail strip along Porter Avenue adjacent to Front Park and a narrow area of industrial facilities to the north. The small retail strip buffers the urban neighborhoods to the south. There are a few small commercial facilities scattered around the NYGCIP, including the Naval and Marine Corps Reserve Center and the City's Colonel Ward Pumping Station in LaSalle Park. Commercial facilities within this unit consist of 1-2 story brick and concrete block structures which exhibit a variety of architectural styles. The typography is flat low-lying except for the industrial area to the north which sits atop the bluff overlooking the Niagara River and Black Rock Canal. Minimal vegetation, such as street trees, is located adjacent to the structures which provides open unobstructed views of the NYGCIP. Front Park, with its mature trees and thick plantations along the bluff provides the commercial area to the south with a natural buffer of the NYGCIP.



Figure 11: Commercial Strip Along Porter Avenue

2.2.3 Transportation Corridors

The Transportation Corridors Unit occurs primarily along the major highway, rail corridor and local roads within the study area. Interstate 190 (I-190) travels north-south through the study area with a single CSX rail line running parallel. Porter Avenue, Busti Avenue and Columbus Parkway serve as the major local roads within the area, which are bisected by numerous city streets, creating a grid pattern. In addition, the ramps and approaches servicing the Peace Bridge Plaza are part of this unit. The highway areas are characterized by level, multi-lanes that include transportation-oriented features such as road signs, guardrails, street lights, walls, abutments, on and off ramps, and bridges. I-190 sits below the bluff with minimal lawn areas providing little color and textures to the landscape unit. Views from the highways are typically focused along the corridor providing little opportunity for casual viewing of the scenery from the motorists. Motorists may experience prolonged open view from I-190 north and south bound lanes as they approach the NYGCIP, but these views are obstructed by the Peace Bridge abutments, ramp abutments and walls, and Porter Avenue bridge. Porter Avenue is a two lane level road, which slopes down towards Lake Erie that includes transportation-oriented features including signalized and non-signalized intersections, street trees, and sidewalks. Vermont Street's axis is oriented to provide motorists unobstructed views between the Plaza and Front Park, along the main approach ramp into the Plaza. The other local roads are characterized by level, single lanes that include similar transit-oriented features. Views from the local roads, including Porter Avenue, Busti Avenue, Vermont Street, and along the various ramps, provide a greater opportunity for casual viewing due to their lower speeds and stops at intersections.



Figure 12: I-190 Transportation Corridor



2.2.4 Recreation / Parkland

The primary recreation area is Front Park, which is located south of the Peace Bridge Plaza. Located within the park is Baird Drive, which provides access through the park to the Plaza. A large open play field, tennis courts, pathways, and picnic areas are located within the park. Front Park's terrace, a paved parking and viewing area, sits atop the bluff providing views out over the head of the Niagara River, Lake Erie, and the Canadian shoreline in the background. LaSalle Park's splash pad and swimming pool is located to the south while the small Columbus Triangle park is located to the north of the Project Area. Views from LaSalle Park are obstructed by the Porter Avenue bridge while views from Columbus Triangle are obstructed by the approach ramp from the Peace Bridge and the Plaza. The Shoreline Trail (formerly Erie County Riverwalk) travels through the study area north to south crossing over the CSX rail line just south of the Peace Bridge. The Shoreline Trail provides prolonged open views of the NYGCIP, Niagara River, and Lake Erie.



Figure 13: Front Park

2.2.5 River / Waterfront

This unit includes the Niagara River, Black Rock Canal, including Bird Island Pier, Lake Erie and the shorelines of these water bodies. The distinguishing characteristic of views from these areas is the dominance of open water in the foreground and middle ground. The water and its visible flow adds interest to the views, especially in many locations where there is a lack of foreground screening, resulting in panoramic views across the water. These views often include the Peace Bridge and I-190 in the foreground and middle ground. Background scenery is variable, ranging from the Buffalo skyline to shoreline parks, such as LaSalle Park.



Figure 14: Black Rock Canal and the Niagara River



2.3 VIEWSHEDS

Viewsheds define what can be seen or valued by viewer groups within the landscape units, illustrate the existing and proposed visual environment, and are used to assess the visual impact of the NYGCIP. Eleven viewsheds were selected to represent typical views by the five viewer groups for their effectiveness in depicting the visual impacts of the proposed improvements of the NYGCIP (refer to Figure 15).

Table 1 provides a summary of the viewsheds, along with their associated landscape units, viewer groups, and key visual features. Worksheets summarizing the evaluations of the twelve viewshed evaluations, including their existing and proposed visual quality, are documented in Attachment A.

Table 1: Viewshed Assessment Summary.

View	Viewer Group	Landscape Unit	Key Visual Features
View 1a/1b - Porter Avenue Looking Southwest (Roundabout/ Intersection Options)	Local residents / Travelers/ Commuters / Recreational Users	Commercial / Institutional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Porter Avenue dominates the foreground and middleground. Porter Avenue divides the vegetation along the background and obstructs the view towards Lake Erie.
View 2 - Front Park Looking South	Recreational Users	Recreation / Parkland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The meandering multi-use trail presents an attractive sight in the middle/backgrounds. Minimal man-made features dot the landscape providing a more naturalized viewshed.
View 3 - Front Park Looking Northwest	Recreational Users	Recreation / Parkland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The natural buffer obstructs the view of the man-made features in the background. The forms of the hedge and evergreens combine to form a cohesive visual pattern.
View 4 - Front Park Looking East	Recreational Users	Recreation / Parkland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The view is dominated by the Park's terrace pavement in the foreground. There is a strong visual order with the pavement in the foreground, open lawn in the middleground and the landscaping in the background.
View 5 - Busti Avenue Looking West	Local residents	Urban residential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The view is dominated by Busti Avenue and the park's open lawn area. The linear forms of the pavement, open lawn and landscaping in the background create a cohesive visual pattern between the man-made and natural features.
View 6 - Vermont Street Looking Southwest	Local residents / Business employees	Urban residential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Street trees frame the view focusing on the plaza's gated entrance. Utility poles and overhead wires encroach on the residential street image.

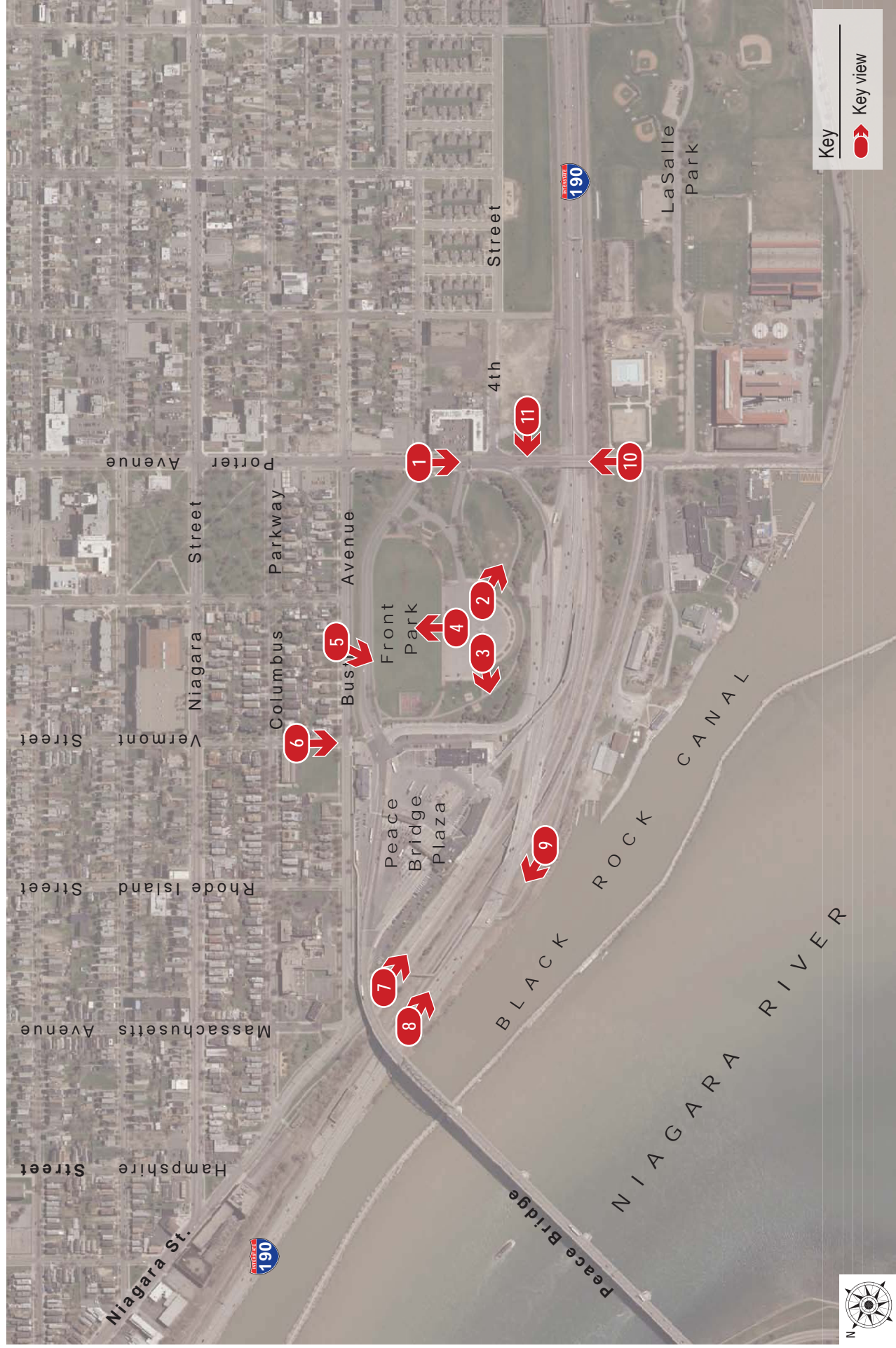


Figure 15: Location of Key Views



View	Viewer Group	Landscape Unit	Key Visual Features
View 7 - Shoreline Trail Looking South	Local residents / Business employees / Travelers / Commuters	Transportation corridors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The open view of Lake Erie provides a unique element within the viewshed. The roadway's pavement and Lake Erie present conflicting landscape character between the man-made and natural elements.
View 8 - Southbound I-190 Looking South	Business employees / Travelers / Commuters	Transportation corridors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The trees and shrubs along the east screen views of the commercial buildings and plaza. Minimal vegetation degrades the natural setting of the water, creating little harmony between the man-made and natural elements.
View 9 - Shoreline Trail Looking North	Recreational users	River / Waterfront	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The vegetation in the foreground and middle ground provides varying texture and color. The Peace Bridge structure encroaches on the mainly natural landscape.
View 10a/10b - Porter Avenue Looking Northeast (Roundabout/ Intersection Options)	Local residents / Business employees / Travelers / Commuters / Recreational users	Transportation corridors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Porter Avenue and its street trees provide visual continuity from the foreground to the background. The colors, textures and patterns of the roadside elements unify the man-made elements.
View 11 - D'Youville College Athletic Fields Looking North	Local residents / Recreational users	Transportation corridors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The open lawn in the foreground dominates the view. Porter Avenue does little to disrupt the visual relationship between the open lawn in the foreground and the wooded area in the background.

2.4 COMMUNITY GOALS FOR VISUAL QUALITY

The sensitivity toward changes in the area's visual resources is evident from the general planning and zoning recommendations established by the City of Buffalo. The following summarizes the City's recommendations for scenic and visual resource preservation.

City of Buffalo's Comprehensive Plan
Maintain and improve waterfront access along Porter Avenue.
Maintain and improve key neighborhood/waterfront nodes, including Front Park and LaSalle Park.
Apply the principle of sustainable waterfront redevelopment through the City's Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP) and the Buffalo Waterfront Corridor Initiative (WCI) by integrating environmental, social and economic factors.



City of Buffalo's Draft Green Code

- Develop strategies for improving the appearance of "first impression" corridors and entry points into the City.
- Support efforts to improve traffic flow over the Peace Bridge, while minimizing the impacts on Front Park and surrounding neighborhoods.
- Reduce the negative effects of highways on adjacent neighborhoods.
- Restore the night sky by basin permissible levels of brightness on the type of place being lit.
- Restore naturalized edges on non-working waterfronts.
- Minimize impervious surfaces and allow the use of permeable pavement.
- Ensure high-quality design of open spaces to promote user comfort, safety, accessibility, and year-round use; enhance the quality of place; and increase value to adjacent properties.
- Reestablish lost elements of the Olmsted Park and parkway system, and reserve its borders for the highest grade of development.

City of Buffalo's Local Waterfront Revitalization Program

- Provide public visual access to waterfront lands and waters at all sites where practical.
 - Avoid loss of existing visual access.
 - Limit physical blockage of existing visual access by development or activities due to the scale, design, location, or type structures.
 - Protect view corridors provided by streets and other public areas leading to the waterfront.
 - Protect visual access to open space areas associated with natural resources.
 - Minimize adverse impacts of new development on visual access.
 - Provide for view corridors to the shoreline in those locations where new structures would block views of the waterfront from inland public vantage points, particularly for redevelopment of the inner and outer harbor areas.
 - Use structural design and siting/building orientation techniques to preserve or retain visual access and minimize obstruction of views.
 - Visual access requirements may be reduced where site conditions, including vegetative cover or natural protective features, block potential views.
 - Vegetative or structural screening of an industrial or commercial waterfront site is allowed if the resulting overall visual quality outweighs the loss of visual access.
 - Provide compensatory mitigation for loss of visual access.
 - Provide public visual access from vantage points on the site where development of the site blocks visual access from inland public vantage points.
 - Provide for additional and comparable visual access at nearby locations, if physical access cannot be provided on-site.
 - Increase visual access to the waterfront whenever practical.
 - Provide interpretative exhibits at appropriate locations for visual access to enhance public understanding and enjoyment of views of waterfront resources, heritage sites, and prominent water-dependent uses that are an important part of the waterfront landscape.
 - Provide and improve visual access to areas of high visual quality including water-dependent uses, natural resources, and panoramas of the Niagara River, Buffalo River, Lake Erie and downtown Buffalo.



City of Buffalo's Local Waterfront Revitalization Program

Protect and improve visual quality throughout the local waterfront revitalization area.

Urban areas and historic waterfront communities. The following activities generally have a visual impact on the waterfront and should be considered with respect to design quality and interest:

- Transportation infrastructure and operations;
- Major structures that are recognized advancements or achievements in architecture or engineering;
- Lighthouses and other navigation aids, piers, and bridges;
- Natural resources, wetlands, concentrations of fish or wildlife; and
- Important open space including vegetated upland areas, expanses of surface water, and shorelines in their natural condition.

Ensure that improvements as a part of the redevelopment of the Peace Bridge Plaza provide opportunities for scenic viewing and improve and enhance the scenic quality of the area.

Design public transportation facilities and infrastructure, including highway on and off ramps and overhead signage (all vertical elements) so as not to interfere with vistas of the waterfront.

Protect the aesthetic quality of locally recognized scenic areas.

Local areas of recognized scenic quality include views of Lake Erie and Niagara River from LaSalle Park and Front Park.

Development and land use decisions in these areas should take into consideration the scenic value of these locations and their surrounding resources.

- Efforts should be taken to improve views of the Lake Erie and Niagara River, where practicable, from these areas.
- Redevelopment along the shoreline that is situated adjacent to these areas should not block views of the area(s) or the waterfront.
- Redevelopment along the shoreline that is situated adjacent to these areas should be designed and oriented to enhance scenic vistas and the scenic quality of the surrounding area.
- The greenway system network should be linked to these scenic resources.



2.5 VISUAL QUALITY

To begin to evaluate the visual impact of the proposed project, the visual quality of the existing landscape must be determined. Following the guidelines stated in the Federal Highway Administration's Visual Impact Assessment for Highway Projects, the visual quality of the landscape shall be determined by the following:

- Vividness: The memorable landscape components as they combine in striking and distinctive visual patterns;
- Intactness: The visual integrity of the natural and man-made landscape and the visual freedom from element encroachment; and,
- Unity: The visual coherence and compositional harmony of the landscape considered as a whole, a combination of the natural and man-made elements of the view.

Table 2 shall be used to determine the visual quality.

Table 2: Visual Quality Evaluation Table.

Criteria	High Quality	Moderate/Average Quality	Low Quality
Vividness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Highly memorable. ▪ Elements combine in striking visual patterns. ▪ Presence of distinct focal point(s). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Somewhat memorable. ▪ Elements form perceivable pattern(s). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Not vivid. ▪ Elements appear random with no perceivable pattern(s).
Intactness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lack of man-made development does not disrupt the natural landscape. ▪ Minimal to no encroachments to the landscape are visible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Man-made development and the natural landscape are disturbed and encroach on the visual setting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The landscape has encroaching elements that create an eyesore to viewers.
Unity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Man-made development blends with the natural landscape providing an integrated design with its setting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Some visual relation between man-made and natural setting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Man-made and natural patterns do not reinforce each other and visually looks chaotic and jumbled.

These three visual qualities are evaluated independently, and each quality is assigned a rating from 1 to 7, as defined below:

- 0 to 1.5 - Very low
- 1.5 to 2.5 - Low
- 2.5 to 3.5 - Moderately low
- 3.5 to 4.5 - Moderate / Average
- 4.5 to 5.5 - Moderately high
- 5.5 to 6.5 - High
- 6.5 to 7.0 - Very high

The following discussion uses Table 2 for evaluating the visual quality of the eleven key viewsheds.



2.6 VIEW 1 - PORTER AVENUE LOOKING SOUTHWEST

Local residents, travelers and recreational users have this view of Porter Avenue as they travel southwest. This viewpoint is located west of the Porter Avenue intersection with Busti Avenue. Porter Avenue rises in the middle/background to cross over I-190. The two lanes in both directions plus the median turning lane dominate the foreground with street trees on the perimeter.

Vividness: The foreground and middleground views are dominated by Porter Avenue, roadside landscaping, and commercial buildings are typical and unmemorable. The background view of Lake Erie is obstructed by the rising Porter Avenue that crosses the I-190. The vividness rating is low.



Figure 16: View 1 - Porter Avenue Looking Southwest

Intactness: Porter Avenue divides the vegetation along the background. The street trees and maintained lawn along Porter Avenue provides a continuous green strip from foreground to background. The intactness rating is moderately low.

Unity: The street trees and grass strips along Porter Avenue visually link the foreground and background. The continuous corridor of Porter Avenue provides supportive colors, textures and materials. The lawn areas are well maintained with little visual clutter from roadside signage and utilities. The unity rating is moderate/average.

Table 3: View 1 - Existing Visual Quality Evaluation Summary.

View	Vividness	Intactness	Unity	Visual Quality
View 1 - Porter Avenue Looking Southwest	1.5	3	4	2.8



2.7 VIEW 2 - FRONT PARK LOOKING SOUTH

Recreational users have this view of the NYGCIP from the terrace of Front Park. The park's manicured plant beds and lawn is in the foreground. Mature trees dominate the middle/background providing a natural buffer for the park. A multi-use trail moves through the viewshed. Ramps A and P are slightly visible through the natural buffer in the middleground.

Vividness: The meandering multi-use trail presents an attractive sight in the middle/backgrounds. The well maintained landscaping and mature trees provide a striking viewshed which makes it memorable. The vividness rating is high.



Figure 17: View 2 - Front Park Looking South

Intactness: The landscaping is intact except for the minor gap off to the right in the middleground. The landscaping is also contextually linked from the foreground to the background by the meandering multi-use trail. Minimal man-made features dot the landscape providing a more naturalized viewshed. The intactness rating is very high.

Unity: The lawn and landscaping are well maintained. The landscape palette of colors, textures and forms provides a harmonious natural viewshed. The absence of man-made features strengthens the natural forms of the landscape. The unity rating is very high.

Table 4: View 2 - Existing Visual Quality Evaluation Summary.

View	Vividness	Intactness	Unity	Visual Quality
View 2 - Front Park Looking South	5.5	6.5	6.5	6.2

2.8 VIEW 3 - FRONT PARK LOOKING NORTHWEST

Recreational users have this view of the NYGCIP looking northwest from the terrace of Front Park. The park's manicured plant beds are in the foreground while a mass of evergreens dot the middleground. Ramp A in the background is partially obscured by the evergreens.

Vividness: The view is dominated by the mass of evergreens in the middleground and manicured hedge in the foreground. These elements are typical and provide little to the visual distinctiveness of the landscape which makes it unmemorable. The vividness rating is moderate/average.



Figure 18: View 3 - Front Park Looking Northwest

Intactness: While the landscaping is intact, the man-made features of Ramp A and the chain-link fence subtract from the natural environment. The visual integrity is provided by the longitudinal patterns of the hedge, evergreen trees and Ramp A. The intactness rating is moderate/average.

Unity: The forms of the hedge, evergreens and Ramp A combine to form a cohesive visual pattern between the man-made and natural features. However, the mass of evergreens obscures the background that subtracts from overall unity of the viewshed. The unity rating is moderately high.

Table 6: View 3 - Existing Visual Quality Evaluation Summary.

View	Vividness	Intactness	Unity	Visual Quality
View 3 - Front Park Looking Northwest	4.0	3.5	4.5	4.0



2.9 VIEW 4 - FRONT PARK LOOKING EAST

Recreational users have this view of Front Park looking east from the park's terrace. The terrace's pavement dominates the foreground while the park's open lawn is in the middleground. Minor trees dot the open lawn area while the City's Propect Hill Historic District is visible in the background. Vehicular access to the Plaza within the park is also visible in the background.

Vividness: The view is dominated by the pavement of the terrace in the foreground and the open lawn of the middleground which contain no unique or memorable elements. The minor trees in the middleground and the landscaping off in the distance is typical and is not visually striking. The vividness rating is low.



Figure 19: View 4 - Front Park Looking East

Intactness: There is a strong visual order with the pavement in the foreground, open lawn in the middleground and the landscaping in the background. The minor trees and Plaza access does little to subtract from this order. Minimal man-made features dot the landscape providing a more naturalized viewshed. The intactness rating is high.

Unity: The linear forms of the pavement, open lawn and landscaping in the background create a cohesive visual pattern between the man-made and natural features. However, the contrasting colors and textures between the pavement and landscaping provides no integration of the man-made development with the natural setting. The unity rating is moderate/average.

Table 7: View 4 - Existing Visual Quality Evaluation Summary.

View	Vividness	Intactness	Unity	Visual Quality
View 4 - Front Park Looking East	1.5	6.0	4.0	3.8



2.10 VIEW 5 - BUSTI AVENUE LOOKING WEST

Local residents have this view of Front Park from Busti Avenue looking west. Busti Avenue is in the foreground while the park's open lawn and the Plaza's access drive is in the middleground. Lake Erie in the background is obscured by the natural vegetation and the plaza off to the right. Lawn and pavement dominate the view.

Vividness: The view is dominated by Busti Avenue and the park's open lawn which contain no unique or memorable elements. The striking view of Lake Erie is obscured by the vegetation and plaza subtracting from the water's relation to the landscape. The vividness rating is low.



Figure 20: View 5 - Busti Avenue Looking West

Intactness: There is a strong visual order with the pavement in the foreground, open lawn in the middleground and the landscaping in the background. The minor trees and plaza access does little to subtract from this order. Few man-made features dot the landscape providing a more naturalized viewshed. The intactness rating is moderately high.

Unity: The linear forms of the pavement, open lawn and landscaping in the background create a cohesive visual pattern between the man-made and natural features. The contrasting colors and textures between the pavement and landscaping provides no integration of the man-made development with the natural setting. There is no strong connection to the water. The unity rating is moderately low.

Table 8: View 5 - Existing Visual Quality Evaluation Summary.

View	Vividness	Intactness	Unity	Visual Quality
View 5 - Busti Avenue Looking West	2.0	5.0	3.5	3.5



2.11 VIEW 6 - VERMONT STREET LOOKING SOUTHWEST

Local residents and business employees have this view of the NYGCIP from Vermont Street looking southwest. The viewpoint is located midway between Busti Avenue and Columbus Parkway. Single family, two-story residences line the street to the south while a newly planted green area is located to the north. The Plaza's employee entrance and facility is visible in the background obscuring the view to Canada. Numerous utility wires and poles dot the landscape with mature and young trees lining the street.



Figure 21: View 6 - Vermont Street Looking Southwest

Vividness: The lining of street trees manipulate the view focusing on the plaza's gated entrance and facility which is not unique or memorable. Man-made elements are scattered throughout the view providing too many contrasting elements. The vividness rating is low.

Intactness: The two story residences with the street trees present a fairly intact view of an urban residential street. The varying architectural styles, materials, colors and textures is typical for this type of neighborhood. Utility poles and overhead wires encroach on the residential street image. The intactness rating is low.

Unity: Street details, including pavement, sidewalks, planting area and lawn, are well defined and maintained. The utility poles and overhead wires degrade the overall harmony of the view. The unity rating is low.

Table 9: View 6 - Existing Visual Quality Evaluation Summary.

View	Vividness	Intactness	Unity	Visual Quality
View 6 - Vermont Street Looking Southwest	1.5	2.5	2.5	2.2



2.12 VIEW 7 - SHORELINE TRAIL LOOKING SOUTH

Local residents, and recreational users have this view of the NYGCIP traveling south along the Shoreline Trail. The view is dominated by the structural elements and roadway utilities of Ramp S, with views of the Plaza to the east and Lake Erie to the west. Black Rock Canal is partially visible to the west.

Vividness: The open view of Lake Erie provides a unique element and draws the attention away from the roadway's elements. The vegetation and water provides some color and texture to the viewshed. The vividness rating is high.



Figure 22: View 7 - Shoreline Trail Looking South

Intactness: The vegetation along the Shoreline Trail obscures the visual connection to the distant water of Lake Erie, and the roadway's pavement and water present conflicting landscape characters. The lack of maintenance along the Shoreline Trail degrades the visual integrity of the landscape. The intactness rating is moderately low.

Unity: The lack of a visual connection between the water and the roadways creates little harmony between the man-made and natural elements. The linear wall and the vegetation screen do little to integrate the man-made features with the landscape. The unity rating is moderately low.

Table 10: View 7 - Existing Visual Quality Evaluation Summary.

View	Vividness	Intactness	Unity	Visual Quality
View 7 - Shoreline Trail Looking South	5.5	3.5	2.5	3.8



2.13 VIEW 8 - SOUTHBOUND I-190 LOOKING SOUTH

Local residents, business employees, and commuters have this view of the NYGCIP traveling southbound on I-190. The view is dominated by the highway, with views of the roadside vegetation and pedestrian bridge to the east and vegetation to the west. Highway utilities, including roadway signage and lighting dot the landscape.

Vividness: The highway pavement with vegetation to the east and west is not unusual making this view unmemorable. Man-made elements are scattered throughout the view providing too many contrasting elements. The vividness rating is low.



Figure 23: View 8 - I-190 Southbound Looking South

Intactness: The trees and shrubs along the east partially screen views of Ramp S and the pedestrian bridge. However, the highway disrupts the connection between the natural setting to the west and the one to the east, thus creating conflicting landscape characters. The intactness rating is low.

Unity: Minimal vegetation with the highway in the middle degrades the natural setting creating little harmony between the man-made and natural elements. The vegetation and highway's contrasting colors and textures provide little integration of the man-made elements with its surrounding landscape. The unity rating is moderately low.

Table 11: View 8 - Existing Visual Quality Evaluation Summary.

View	Vividness	Intactness	Unity	Visual Quality
View 8 - Southbound I-190 Looking South	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5

2.14 VIEW 9 - SHORELINE TRAIL LOOKING NORTH

Recreational users have this view of the NYGCIP from the Shoreline Trail traveling north. The view is dominated by vegetation in the foreground. The linear path focuses the viewshed towards the Peace Bridge in the background. The Niagara River is slightly visible off to the west while the underpass of the Shoreline Trail and the I-190 above is visible to the east.

Vividness: The view along the Shoreline Trail presents an attractive view of the Peace Bridge in the distance. In addition, the overgrown vegetation in the foreground and middleground provides varying texture and color making the view memorable. The vividness rating is high.



Figure 24: View 9 - Shoreline Trail Looking North

Intactness: The Peace Bridge structure encroaches on the mainly natural landscape within the viewshed drawing one's focus away from the landscape and onto the man-made structure. The chain-link fence within the vegetation competes with the natural form, colors and texture of the landscape. The intactness rating is low.

Unity: Except for the bridge in the background, the natural vegetation blends with the man-made structures of the I-190 underpass and chain-link fence. The curve at the end of the Shoreline Trail ties the man-made structure with the surrounding landscape creating a unity between the natural and man-made elements. The unity rating is moderately high.

Table 12: View 9 - Existing Visual Quality Evaluation Summary.

View	Vividness	Intactness	Unity	Visual Quality
View 9 - Shoreline Trail Looking North	6.5	2.5	4.5	4.5



2.15 VIEW 10 - PORTER AVENUE LOOKING NORTHEAST

Local residents, business employees, travelers and recreational users have this view of the NYGCIP traveling northeast on Porter Avenue. Porter Avenue drops off in the middleground and rises in the background. The wide span of pavement dominates the view while the street trees and vegetation within Front Park, in the middleground, frames the viewshed. Commercial buildings are visible in the background off to the south.

Vividness: The foreground and middleground views are dominated by Porter Avenue and roadside elements, including street trees, which are typical and unmemorable. The commercial buildings in the background are partially obscured by the vegetation. The vividness rating is low.



Figure 25: View 10 - Porter Avenue Looking Northeast

Intactness: Porter Avenue and its street trees provides visual continuity from foreground to the background. Porter Avenue's roadside elements, such as the brick edging, sidewalks, street trees and maintained lawn areas provide visual order. The intactness rating is moderate/average.

Unity: The colors, textures and patterns of the roadside elements unify the man-made elements. The addition of the natural landscape creates a coherent visual pattern. The unity rating is moderately high.

Table 13: View 10 - Existing Visual Quality Evaluation Summary.

View	Vividness	Intactness	Unity	Visual Quality
View 10 - Porter Avenue Looking Northeast	2.5	4.0	5.0	3.8



2.16 View 11 - D'YOUVILLE COLLEGE ATHLETIC FIELDS LOOKING NORTH

Local residents and recreational users have this view of the NYGCIP from D'Youville College's athletic fields looking north. The college's open fields dominate the foreground while Porter Avenue is visible in the middleground. Ramp P is partially obstructed in the background.

Vividness: The open lawn in the foreground dominates the view and does not contain any unique or memorable elements. Porter Avenue in the middleground, with its utility and streetscape elements are typical and unmemorable. The vividness rating is low.



Figure 26: View 11 - D'Youville College Athletic Fields Looking North

Intactness: Except for Ramp P in the background, the wooded middleground and background is mainly intact. In addition, Porter Avenue does little to disrupt the visual relationship between the open lawn and wooded background. The utility and streetscape vertical elements partially disrupts the natural setting of the viewshed. The intactness rating is moderately high.

Unity: The wooded areas in the background are somewhat visually integrated with the open lawn in the foreground, providing a predominantly natural environment. The minimal utility poles with overhead wires and street lights does little to visually disrupt the viewshed. The unity rating is moderate/average.

Table 14: View 11 - Existing Visual Quality Evaluation Summary.

View	Vividness	Intactness	Unity	Visual Quality
View 11 - D'Youville College Athletic Fields Looking North	2.5	4.5	3.5	3.5



3 VIEWER GROUPS

Visual impact is the combination of the effect on the visual quality of the landscape and the perceived viewer's sensitivity. Sensitivity depends on the number and type of viewers and understanding the viewers exposure, activity and awareness. Based on these factors, viewers can be placed into similar groups. The viewer groups within the study area are separated into four (4) categories:

- Local Residents: People living in and around the project area;
- Business Employees: People working in and around the project area;
- Travelers / Commuters: People traveling through the project area; and
- Recreational Users: People involved in outdoor activities in and around the project area.

The following factors that modify perception are used to determine the viewer group's sensitivity:

- Proximity to the visual resource;
- Number of viewers;
- Frequency and duration of views;
- Viewer's activity; and,
- Viewer's awareness.

The following describes the viewer groups and the predicted viewer response based on their physical factors.

3.1 LOCAL RESIDENTS

Residents may view the NYGCIP from their homes, front and back yards, and local roads. Except when involved in local travel, these viewers are likely to be stationary, and from certain locations will have frequent and prolonged views of the NYGCIP. Local residents may view from ground level or elevated vantage points and from foreground or background distances. However, the opportunities for such views are limited by the general orientation of residential structures toward the adjacent street, screening provided by other buildings, fences and trees, and their distance from the project area. Residents know the local landscape and are likely to be sensitive to changes to particular views that are important to them. Therefore, residents' sensitivity to visual quality is high due to their close proximity, long duration and frequent exposure, and their familiarity to the area's visual environment.



3.2 BUSINESS EMPLOYEES

These individuals work at local businesses, with the greatest concentration of employees located in the City of Buffalo, primarily within commercial and industrial districts downtown. Except while traveling to and from their places of employment, their views of the project area are generally limited due to their focus on work activities. Limited views tend to be quick glances towards the outside with the NYGCIP in the middle and background. In some instances, offices with views toward the NYGCIP may have the opportunity for prolonged views and will be aware of changes to the visual important. Therefore, business employees' sensitivity to the visual quality is high to moderate due to their limited views, short duration and frequency, and their familiarity to the area's visual environment.

3.3 TRAVELERS / COMMUTERS

This group includes motorists that would view the NYGCIP using the transportation corridors including entering the United States from the Peace Bridge, Interstate I-190 and the local streets adjacent to the Plaza. Highway motorists would view the area while traveling at high speeds in short durations in relatively narrow visual fields, as their primary focus will be on the highway traffic and signage. Travelers, being destination-oriented, their sensitivity to visual quality and changes in the local visual environment is low. Commuters, while similar to travelers, make frequent repeat trips and develop a sense of identity with landmarks within the visual environment. Therefore, travelers/commuters' sensitivity to visual quality is moderate to low due to their limited and short views of the project area.

3.4 RECREATIONAL USERS

This group generally includes local residents and visitors involved in outdoor recreational activities on Lake Erie, Niagara River, Black Rock Canal, Front Park, LaSalle Park, the Shoreline Trail, and at other recreational facilities. Like residents, recreationists have opportunities for prolonged continuous views which affords them to focus on the project area, appreciate it in the context of its surrounding landscape, and therefore are highly sensitive to the visual environment. Recreational users' sensitivity to visual quality is high due to their close proximity, long duration and frequent exposure, and their sensitivity to the area's visual environment.



4 VISUAL EFFECTS

Visual impacts of the proposed project were determined by assessing changes in the visual quality of viewsheds from the perspective of the landscape units, and then predicting the viewer group's response to that change. Photo simulations were used to predict the visual change from key views. All changes were considered from the perspective of the viewer groups and their sensitivity toward the visual environment. Changes to visual resources were assessed by review of the proposed project's design (refer to Figure 3), focusing on construction of new connections, roadway improvements, including streetscape elements, and the removal of trees and landscape areas.

4.1 CHANGES TO VISUAL CHARACTER

The proposed project's impacts on the visual quality of the landscape units, and the selected key views within those landscape units, are described in terms of the vividness, intactness, and unity criteria (refer to Section 2.5) in the following sections. Table 15 provides a summary of the visual quality change of each key view.



Table 15: Visual Quality Rating Changes by Key View.

Key view	Existing Condition	Proposed Condition	Visual Quality Change
View 1a - Porter Avenue Looking Southwest (Roundabout Option)	Moderately low	Moderately Low	Slight Increase
View 1b - Porter Avenue Looking Southwest (Intersection Option)	Moderately low	Moderately Low	No change
View 2 - Front Park Looking South	High	High	No change
View 3 - Front Park Looking Northwest	Moderate / Average	Moderate / Average	No change
View 4 - Front Park Looking East	Moderate / Average	Moderate / Average	Slight Increase
View 5 - Busti Avenue Looking West	Moderate / Average	Moderate / Average	Slight Increase
View 6 - Vermont Street Looking Southwest	Low	Low	No change
View 7 - Shoreline Trail Looking South	Moderate / Average	Moderately low	Slight Decrease
View 8 - Southbound I-190 Looking South	Moderately low	Moderately low	Slight Increase
View 9 - Shoreline Trail Looking North	Moderately high	Moderately low	Slight Decrease
View 10a - Porter Avenue Looking Northeast (Roundabout Option)	Moderate / Average	Moderate / Average	Slight Increase
View 10b - Porter Avenue Looking Northeast (Intersection Option)	Moderate / Average	Moderate / Average	Slight Decrease
View 11 - D'Youville College Athletic Fields Looking North	Moderate / Average	Moderately low	Slight Decrease



4.1.1 View 1a - Porter Avenue Looking Southwest (Roundabout Option)

The roundabout in the background is the only change to the visual environment. Porter Avenue remains the dominate element within the viewshed. The roundabout reduces the linear alignment by encroaching to the north and south, eliminating some vegetation. The foreground and middleground remain unchanged since the improvements are within the existing right-of-way.

Vividness: The foreground and middleground views are dominated by Porter Avenue, roadside landscaping, and commercial buildings are typical and unmemorable. The background view of Lake Erie remains obstructed by the roundabout and rising Porter Avenue that crosses the I-190. The introduction of the roundabout provides a focal point in the background. The vividness rating is low.

Intactness: The roundabout further divides the vegetation along the background by increasing pavement to the north and south. The street trees and maintained lawn along Porter Avenue provides a continuous green strip from foreground to background. The intactness rating is moderately low.

Unity: The street trees and grass strips along Porter Avenue visually link the foreground and background. The continous corridor of Porter Avenue provides supportive colors, textures and materials. The lawn areas are well maintained with little visual clutter from roadside signals and utilities. The unity rating is moderate/average.

Table 16: View 1 - Proposed Visual Quality Evaluation Summary.

View	Vividness	Intactness	Unity	Visual Quality
View 1 - Porter Avenue Looking Southwest	2.5	2.5	4.0	3.0



Figure 27: View 1 - Existing View Looking Southwest

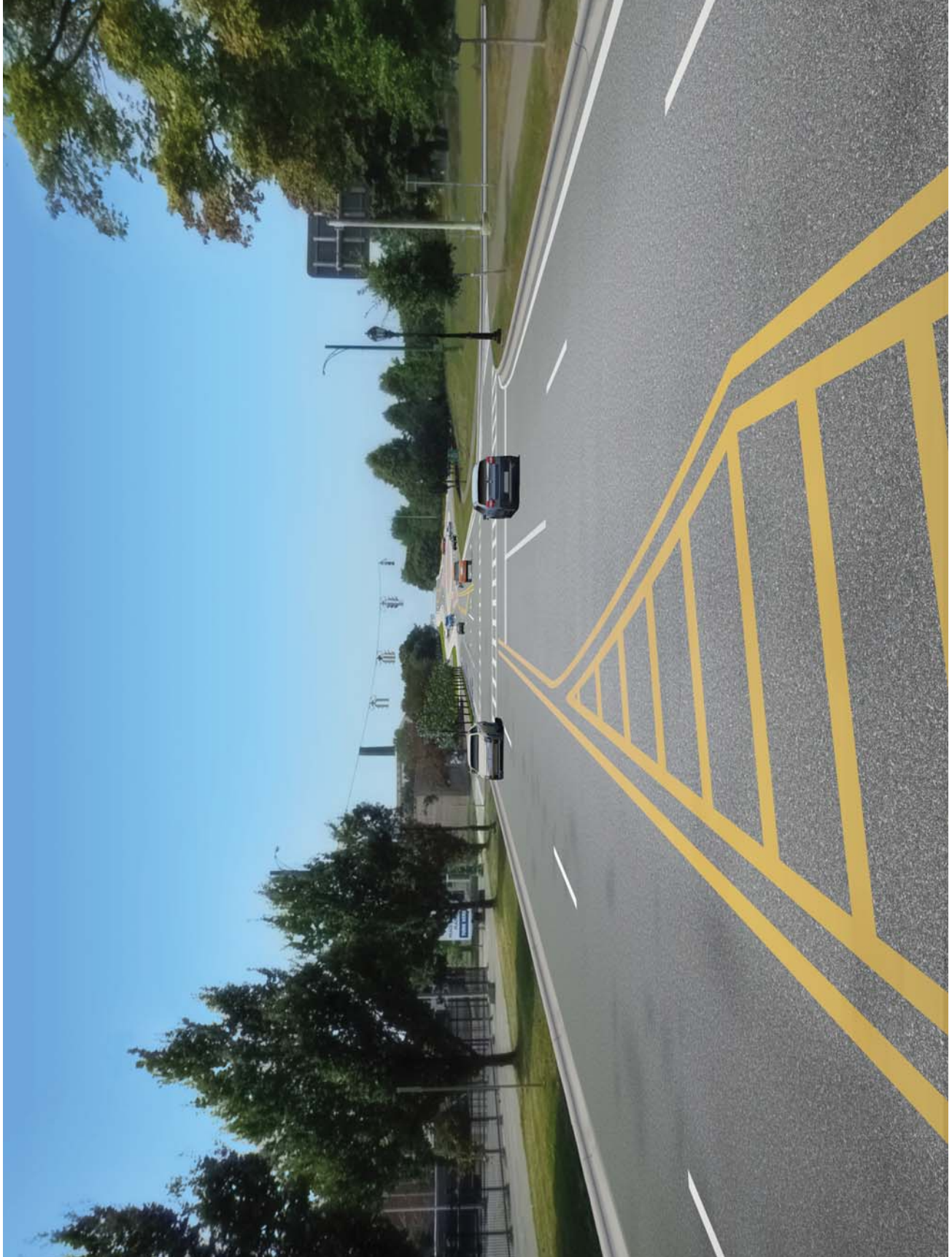


Figure 28: View 1a - Proposed View Looking Southwest



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4.1.2 View 1b - Porter Avenue Looking Southwest (Intersection Option)

Very little has visually changed to this viewshed. Porter Avenue remains the dominate element within the viewshed. Proposed Ramp PN encroaches in the background to the north, eliminating some vegetation. The foreground and middleground remain unchanged since the improvements are within the existing right-of-way.

Vividness: The foreground and middleground views are dominated by Porter Avenue, roadside landscaping, and commercial buildings are typical and unmemorable. The background view of Lake Erie remains obstructed by the intersection and rising Porter Avenue that crosses the I-190. The vividness rating is low.

Intactness: Porter Avenue divides the vegetation along the background. The street trees and maintained lawn along Porter Avenue provides a continuous green strip from foreground to background. The intactness rating is moderately low.

Unity: The street trees and grass strips along Porter Avenue visually link the foreground and background. The continous corridor of Porter Avenue provides supportive colors, textures and materials. The lawn areas are well maintained with little visual clutter from roadside signals and utilities. The unity rating is moderate/average.

Table 17: View 1 - Proposed visual quality evaluation summary.

View	Vividness	Intactness	Unity	Visual Quality
View 1 - Porter Avenue Looking Southwest	1.5	3	4	2.8



Figure 29: View 1 - Existing View Looking Southwest

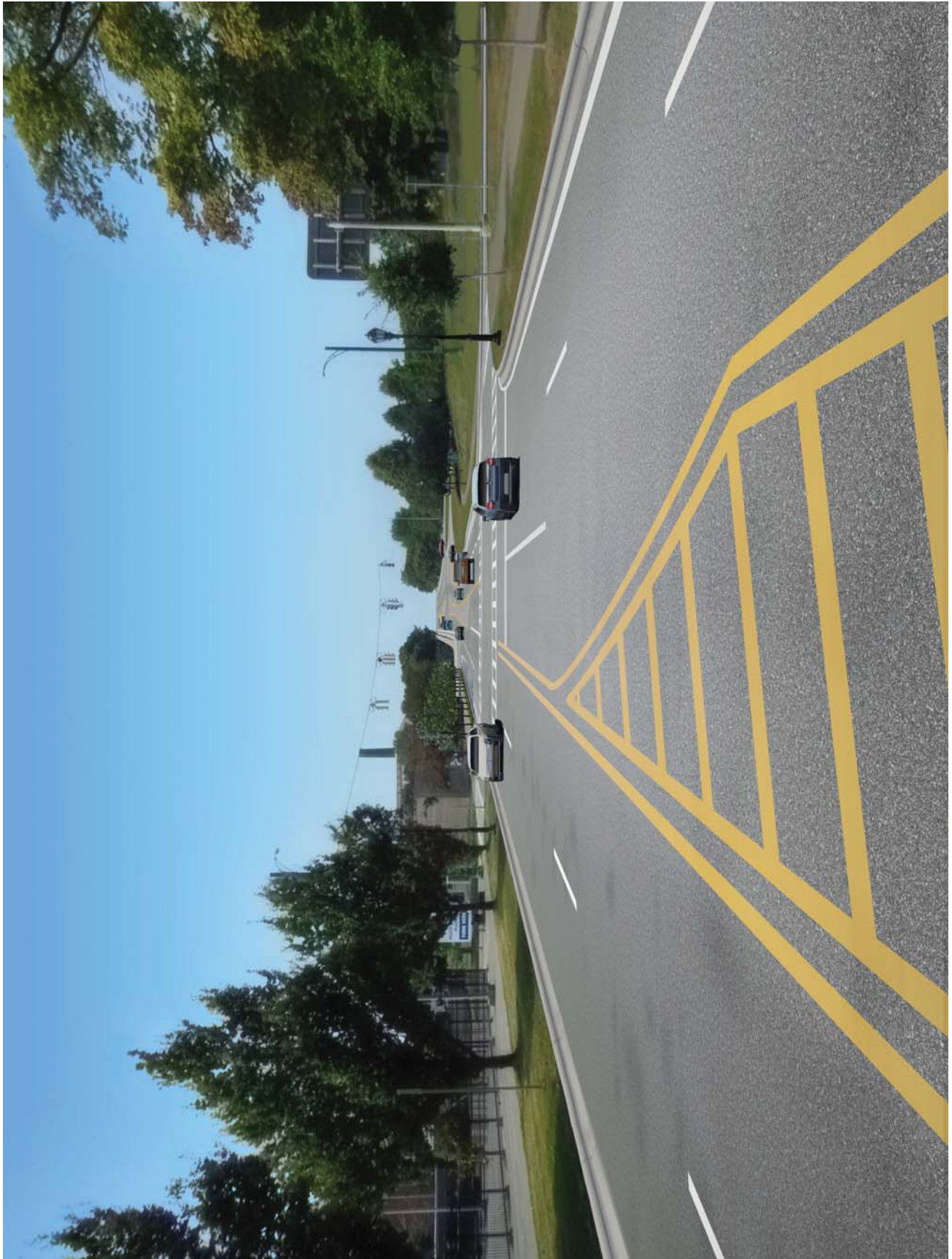


Figure 30: View 1b - Proposed View Looking Southwest



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4.1.3 View 2 - Front Park Looking South

Very little has visually changed to this viewshed. The existing vegetative buffer along the park's edge screens the user's view of the improvements. Ramp PN is unnoticeable. The park's manicured plant beds and lawn remain the dominate elements within the viewshed.

Vividness: The meandering multi-use trail presents an attractive sight in the middle/backgrounds. The well maintained landscaping and mature trees provide a striking viewshed which makes it memorable. The vividness rating is high.

Intactness: The landscaping is intact except for the minor gap off to the right in the middleground. The landscaping is also contextually linked from the foreground to the background by the meandering multi-use trail. Minimal man-made features dot the landscape providing a more naturalized viewshed. The intactness rating is very high.

Unity: The lawn and landscaping are well maintained. The landscape palette of colors, textures and forms provides a harmonious natural viewshed. The absence of man-made features strengthens the natural forms of the landscape. The unity rating is very high.

Table 18: View 2 - Proposed Visual Quality Evaluation Summary.

View	Vividness	Intactness	Unity	Visual Quality
View 2 - Front Park Looking South	5.5	6.5	6.5	6.2



Figure 31: View 2 - Existing View Looking South



Figure 32: View 2 - Proposed View Looking South



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4.1.4 View 3 - Front Park Looking Northwest

Little has visually changed to this viewshed. The minimal widening of Ramp A is unnoticeable in the background due to the park's natural evergreen buffer. Providing additional vegetation in this area will improve the screening of the ramp.

Vividness: The view is dominated by the mass of evergreens in the middleground and manicured hedge in the foreground. These elements are typical and provide little to the visual distinctiveness of the landscape which makes it unmemorable. The vividness rating is moderate/average.

Intactness: While the landscaping is intact, the man-made features of Ramp A, including the widening, and the chain-link fence subtract from the natural environment. The visual integrity is provided by the longitudinal patterns of the hedge, evergreen trees and Ramp A. The intactness rating is moderate/average.

Unity: The forms of the hedge, evergreens and Ramp A combine to form a cohesive visual pattern between the man-made and natural features. However, the mass of evergreens obscures the background that subtracts from overall unity of the viewshed. The unity rating is moderately high.

Table 19: View 3 - Proposed Visual Quality Evaluation Summary.

View	Vividness	Intactness	Unity	Visual Quality
View 3 - Front Park Looking Northwest	4.0	3.5	4.5	4.0



Figure 33: View 3 - Existing View Looking Northwest



Figure 34: : View 3 - Proposed View Looking Northwest



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4.1.5 View 4 - Front Park Looking East

The removal of Baird Drive strengthens the park's open viewshed across the lawn area. The terrace pavement still dominates the foreground and the minor vegetation remains unchanged.

Vividness: The view is dominated by the pavement of the terrace in the foreground and the open lawn of the middleground which contain no unique or memorable elements. The minor trees in the middleground and the landscaping off in the distance is typical and is not visually striking. The vividness rating is low.

Intactness: There is a strong visual order with the pavement in the foreground, open lawn in the middleground and the landscaping in the background. The minor trees do little to subtract from this order, while the removal of man-made features, including Baird Drive, strengthens the open lawn area. The intactness rating is high.

Unity: The linear forms of the pavement, open lawn and landscaping in the background create a cohesive visual pattern between the man-made and natural features. However, the contrasting colors and textures between the pavement and landscaping provides no integration of the man-made development with the natural setting. The unity rating is moderate/average.

Table 20: View 4 - Proposed Visual Quality Evaluation Summary.

View	Vividness	Intactness	Unity	Visual Quality
View 4 - Front Park Looking East	1.5	6.5	4.0	4.0



Figure 35: View 4 - Existing View Looking East



Figure 36: View 4 - Proposed View Looking East



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4.1.6 View 5 - Busti Avenue Looking West

Lake Erie remains partially obscured by the natural vegetation and plaza in the background. The removal of Baird Drive, including the lighting and roadway signage, provides clear unobstructed views across the park's open lawn. The park's open lawn now dominates the middleground.

Vividness: The view is dominated by Busti Avenue and the park's open lawn which contain no unique or memorable elements. The striking view of Lake Erie is obscured by the vegetation and plaza subtracting from the water's relation to the landscape. The vividness rating is low.

Intactness: There is a strong visual order with the pavement in the foreground, open lawn in the middleground and the landscaping in the background. The minor trees do little to subtract from this order, while the removal of man-made features, including Baird Drive, strengthens the open lawn area. Few man-made features dot the landscape providing a more naturalized viewshed. The intactness rating is high.

Unity: The linear forms of the pavement, open lawn and landscaping in the background create a cohesive visual pattern between the man-made and natural features. The contrasting colors and textures between the pavement and landscaping provides no integration of the man-made development with the natural setting. There is no strong connection to the water. The unity rating is moderate/average.

View 5 - Proposed Visual Quality Evaluation Summary.

View	Vividness	Intactness	Unity	Visual Quality
View 5 - Busti Avenue Looking West	2.0	5.5	4.0	3.8



Figure 37: View 5 - Existing View Looking West



Figure 38: View 5 - Proposed View Looking West



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4.1.7 View 6 - Vermont Street Looking Southwest

Very little has visually changed to this viewshed. The removal of the signals in the background is the only change. The plaza's employee entrance and facility remain visible in the background obscuring the view to Canada. And the numerous utility wires and poles dot the landscape with mature and young trees lining the street.

Vividness: The lining of street trees manipulate the view focusing on the Plaza's gated entrance and facility which is not unique or memorable. Man-made elements are scattered throughout the view providing too many contrasting elements. The vividness rating is low.

Intactness: The two story residences with the street trees present a fairly intact view of an urban residential street. The varying architectural styles, materials, colors and textures is typical for this type of neighborhood. Utility poles and overhead wires encroach on the residential street image. The intactness rating is low.

Unity: Street details, including pavement, sidewalks, planting area and lawn, are well defined and maintained. The utility poles and overhead wires degrade the overall harmony of the view. The unity rating is low.

View 6 - Proposed Visual Quality Evaluation Summary.

View	Vividness	Intactness	Unity	Visual Quality
View 6 - Vermont Street Looking Southwest	1.5	2.5	2.5	2.2



Figure 39: View 6 - Existing View Looking Southwest

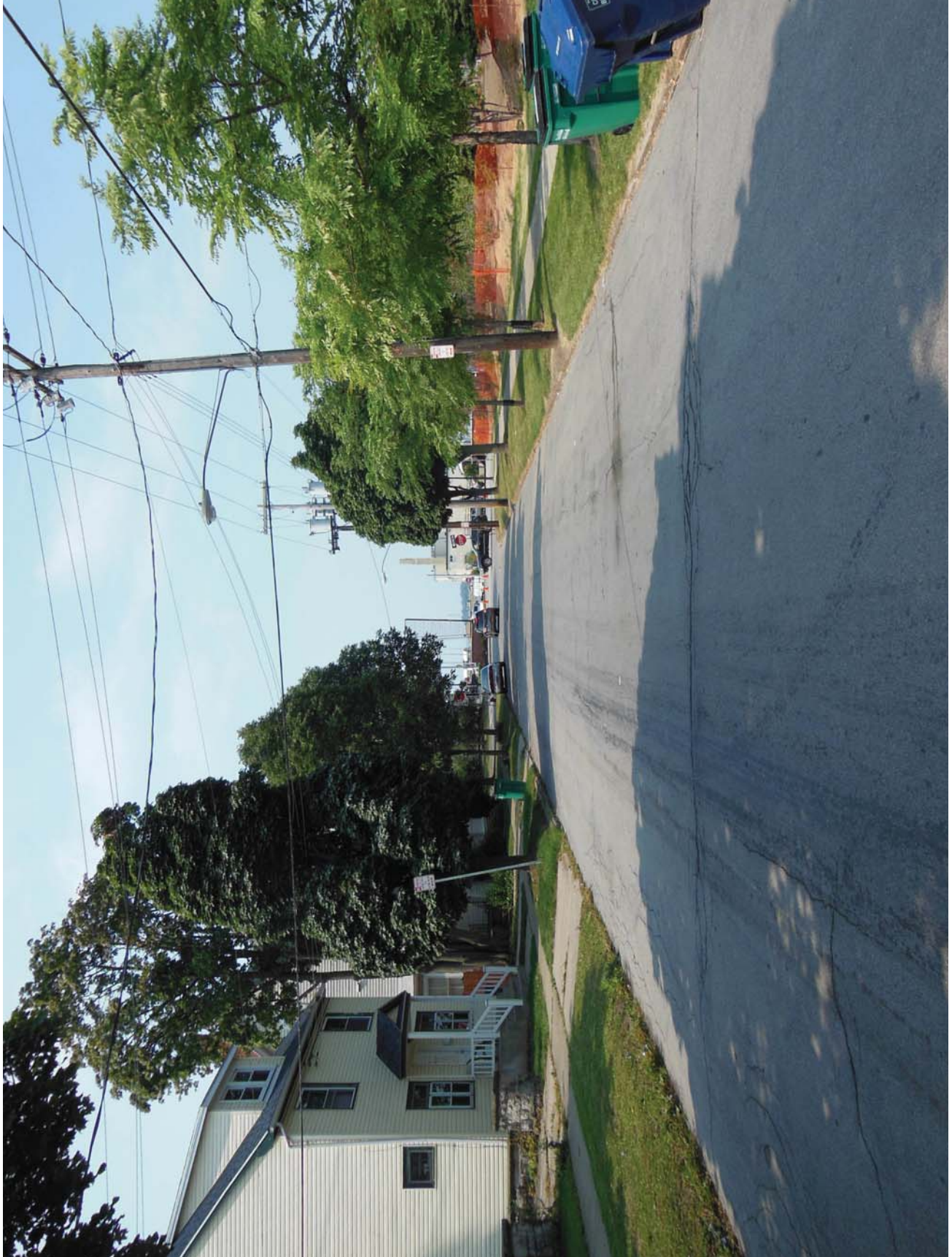


Figure 40: View 6 - Proposed View Looking Southwest



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4.1.8 View 7 - Shoreline Trail Looking South

The open view of Lake Erie is obscured by the pedestrian bridge, while Black Rock Canal is completely obscured. The view is dominated by the structural elements and roadway utilities of Ramp S.

Vividness: The elimination of the open view of Lake Erie reduces this unique element and refocuses on the roadway structural and utility elements making this view unmemorable. The vegetation and water provides some color and texture to the viewshed. The vividness rating is moderate/average.

Intactness: The vegetation and pedestrian bridge obscures the visual connection to the distant water of Lake Erie, and the roadway's pavement and water present conflicting landscape characters. Man-made elements are scattered throughout the view providing too many contrasting elements. The intactness rating is low.

Unity: The lack of a visual connection between the water and the roadways creates little harmony between the man-made and natural elements. The linear wall and the vegetation screen do little to integrate the man-made features with the landscape. The unity rating is moderately low.

Table 21: View 7 - Proposed Visual Quality Evaluation Summary.

View	Vividness	Intactness	Unity	Visual Quality
View 7 - Shoreline Trail Looking South	3.5	2.0	2.5	2.7



Figure 41: View 7 - Existing View Looking South



Figure 42: View 7 - Proposed View Looking South



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4.1.9 View 8 - Southbound I-190 Looking South

The view is dominated by the pedestrian bridge and highway, with views of the roadside vegetation and Plaza to the east and the vegetation to the west obscured by the pedestrian bridge.

Vividness: The view of the pedestrian bridge crossing the viewshed provides a unique element within a typical highway viewshed. Man-made elements are scattered throughout the view providing too many contrasting elements. The vividness rating is moderate/average.

Intactness: The pedestrian bridge and highway disrupt the connection between the natural settings on the east and west, with the bridge almost eliminating the vegetation on the west. The intactness rating is low.

Unity: The various highway features and minimal vegetation provides little harmony between the man-made features and the natural elements. However, the similar color and simple textures of the pedestrian bridge provides some unity within the man-made features. The unity rating is moderately low.

Table 22: View 8 - Proposed Visual Quality Evaluation Summary.

View	Vividness	Intactness	Unity	Visual Quality
View 8 - Southbound I-190 Looking South	3.5	1.5	3.5	2.8



Figure 43: View 8 - Existing View Looking South



Figure 44: View 8 - Proposed View Looking South



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4.1.10 View 9 - Shoreline Trail Looking North

The view is dominated by vegetation in the foreground. The ramp up to the pedestrian bridge focuses the viewshed towards the Peace Bridge, partially obscuring the bridge in the background. The Niagara River is slightly visible off to the west while the underpass of the riverwalk and the I-190 above is visible to the east.

Vividness: The view along the Shoreline Trail presents an attractive view of the Peace Bridge in the distance. The introduction of the pedestrian bridge and ramp reduces the overall impact from the varying texture and color from the overgrown vegetation in the foreground and middleground. The vividness rating is moderately high.

Intactness: The Peace Bridge structure and the pedestrian bridge and ramp encroaches on the mainly natural landscape within the viewshed drawing ones focus away from the landscape and onto the man-made structures. The chain-link fence within the vegetation competes with the natural form, colors and texture of the landscape. The intactness rating is low.

Unity: The pedestrian bridge and ramp plus the Peace Bridge in the background, reduces the unity between the natural vegetation and man-made structures. The Shoreline Trail's ramp disrupts the natural vegetation along the shoreline, reducing the overall unity of the natural landscape. The unity rating is moderately low.

Table 23: View 9 - Proposed Visual Quality Evaluation Summary.

View	Vividness	Intactness	Unity	Visual Quality
View 9 - Shoreline Trail Looking North	6.0	1.5	2.5	3.3



Figure 45: View 9 - Existing View Looking North



Figure 46: View 9 - Proposed View Looking North



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4.1.11 View 10a - Porter Avenue Looking Northeast (Roundabout Option)

Porter Avenue drops of in the middleground just beyond the roundabout and rises in the background. The wide span of pavement from the roundabout dominates the view with the street trees and vegetation in the foreground and middleground framing the viewshed. Commercial buildings remain visible in the background off to the south.

Vividness: The foreground and middleground views are dominated by the roundabout, which is a unique element within the viewshed. The lack of a focal element within the roundabout provides a more typical streetscape and is unmemorable. The commercial buildings in the background are partially obscured by the vegetation. The vividness rating is moderate/average.

Intactness: The roundabout disrupts Porter Avenue and its street trees reducing the visual continuity from foreground to background. However, the roadside elements, such as sidewalks, street trees and maintained lawn areas provide visual order. The intactness rating is moderate/average.

Unity: The colors, textures and patterns of the roadside elements unify the man-made elements. The addition of the natural landscape creates a coherent visual pattern. The unity rating is moderately high.

Table 24: View 10 - Proposed Visual Quality Evaluation Summary.

View	Vividness	Intactness	Unity	Visual Quality
View 10 - Porter Avenue Looking Northeast	3.5	3.5	5.0	4.0



Figure 47: View 10 - Existing View Looking Northeast



Figure 48: View 10a - Proposed View Looking Northeast



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4.1.12 View 10b - Porter Avenue Looking Northeast (Intersection Option)

Porter Avenue drops of in the middleground just beyond the intersection and rises in the background. The wide span of pavement from the intersection dominates the view with the street trees and vegetation in the foreground and middleground framing the viewshed. Commercial buildings remain visible in the background off to the south.

Vividness: The foreground view is dominated by the intersection, which is typical and unmemorable. The lack of a focal element within the viewshed provides a more typical streetscape and is unmemorable. The commercial buildings in the background are partially obscured by the vegetation. The vividness rating is low.

Intactness: The intersection disrupts Porter Avenue reducing the visual continuity from foreground to background. However, the roadside elements, such as sidewalks, street trees and maintained lawn areas provide visual order. The intactness rating is moderate/average.

Unity: The colors, textures and patterns of the roadside elements unify the man-made elements. The addition of the natural landscape creates a coherent visual pattern. The unity rating is moderately high.

Table 25: View 10 - Proposed Visual Quality Evaluation Summary.

View	Vividness	Intactness	Unity	Visual Quality
View 10 - Porter Avenue Looking Northeast	2.5	3.5	5.0	3.7



Figure 49: View 10 - Existing View Looking Northeast



Figure 50: View 10b - Proposed View Looking Northeast



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4.1.13 View 11 - D'Youville College Athletic Fields Looking North

The college's open fields dominate the view in the foreground while the retaining wall for the roundabout partially screen views of Porter Avenue and Ramp P and PN. The additional vegetation balances the loss of vegetation due to the roundabout retaining the overall natural setting of the viewshed.

Vividness: The open lawn in the foreground dominates the view and does not contain any unique or memorable elements. The Porter Avenue roundabout in the middleground, with its utility and streetscape elements are typical and unmemorable. The vividness rating is low.

Intactness: Except for the roundabout's retaining wall in the middleground, the vegetation in the middleground and background is mainly intact. In addition, the roundabout does little to disrupt the visual relationship between the open lawn and wooded background. The utility and streetscape vertical elements partially disrupts the natural setting of the viewshed. The intactness rating is moderate/average.

Unity: The wooded areas in the background are somewhat visually integrated with the open lawn in the foreground, providing a predominantly natural environment. The retaining wall, minimal utility poles with overhead wires and street lights do little to visually disrupt the viewshed. The unity rating is moderately low.

Table 26: View 11 - Proposed Visual Quality Evaluation Summary.

View	Vividness	Intactness	Unity	Visual Quality
View 11 - D'Youville College Athletic Fields Looking North	2.5	4.0	3.0	3.2



Figure 51: View 11 - Existing View Looking North



Figure 52: View 11 - Proposed View Looking North



4.2 VIEWER RESPONSE

The following provides the predicted viewer response for the four viewer groups based on the physical factors listed in Section 3. The visual quality rating for key views shown in Table 15 were studied further with consideration of the viewer group's perspective. In some cases, the effect on visual resources would be greater from the viewer's perspective.

Based on the City's recommendations for avoiding loss of existing visual access and minimizing adverse impacts of new development on visual access (refer to Section 2.4) and the viewer's understanding of the existing visual character, local residents, business employees and commuters from urban residential and commercial/institutional landscape units are predicted to respond negatively to changes in the visual environment because of the addition of new ramps, bridges, pavement, and utility structures. Each of these viewer groups have opportunity for prolonged and in some cases, unobstructed views of the NYGCIP, providing them the most exposure to the proposed project. The removal of Baird Drive within the park is predicted to provide a positive response from the viewer groups. The introduction of the roundabout or signalized intersection and the additional ramps and bridges along Porter Avenue will provide a negative response due to the loss of vegetation. However, the continuous roadway connectivity, with street streets and sidewalks along the Porter Avenue corridor will remain.

The response from travelers within the transportation corridors to the change in visual quality is predicted to be neutral. These viewers will move quickly and have less time to view the NYGCIP, focusing their attention on other motorists, signage and the roadway. While travelers entering from the Peace Bridge may have prolonged views of the NYGCIP as they wait to be processed, typically their focus is on the surrounding visual environment which the proposed project does not change. In some viewsheds, the proposed project provides new focal features, such as views from the I-190, with the introduction of new ramps and bridges. It is predicted the travelers will have a low response due to their minimal sense of identity with the area and traveling at a high rate of speed in conjunction with narrow visual fields their primary focus will be on the highway traffic and signage. The low response will be offset by local residents and business employees utilizing these transportation corridors that would have a familiarity with the area, which are predicted to have a moderate response to the visual changes. Resulting in an overall predicted viewer response of neutral.

The response from recreational users within the recreation/parkland and river/waterfront landscape units is predicted to be moderate. While these viewers are highly sensitive to the visual environment and tend to have prolonged views due to their activities it is the existing buffer within the park and changes along the Shoreline Trail that the response is predicted to be moderate. Views within Front Park of the proposed project are screened by the existing buffer and with the removal of Baird Drive and restoring green space, it is predicted the viewer response will be low. This low response is offset by the visual changes along the Shoreline Trail. This area has the most change to the visual environment, with the addition of the pedestrian bridge, ramp and trail within an existing vegetative corridor, the recreational users will have prolonged views of the visual change. It is predicted the viewer response will be moderately high in this area.



5 MITIGATION

Given the nature of the project and the constraints of the existing right of way, options are limited for mitigation of any changes to the visual quality of the project area. Several measures are proposed to mitigate changes to visual quality and they are categorized into the following groups:

- Professional design and siting; and
- Maintenance.

5.1 PROFESSIONAL DESIGN AND SITING

The reduction of visual quality for the viewer groups will be avoided, minimized, and/or mitigated by the following strategies.

- **Landscape Screening:** While it will not be possible to screen the entire NYGCIP with vegetation, it will be beneficial, in certain locations, to provide additional vegetation to existing natural buffers to improve the screening of parts of the proposed project. Locations where existing vegetation is adjacent to the project area, including areas along Front Park's edges, additional vegetation will be used to soften the contrast between the new ramps, bridges and roadways, and the surrounding landscape.
- **Low Profile:** Given the horizontal layout and the varying road network of the project area within the viewsheds, reducing ramp and bridge profiles will integrate these structures into the surrounding landscape and reduce the visual impact of the NYGCIP. Consideration to required clearances shall be necessary but minimizing these clearances to allow for low profiles will be incorporated.
- **Lighting:** While the Plaza and NYSDOT has set lighting standards and levels, to ensure safe ingress and egress operations, the lighting design will include measures to minimize light spill over onto adjacent properties especially along the edges adjacent to Front Park and Porter Avenue. Measures to reduce spillover will include full cutoff fixtures and where feasible, lower poles.
- **Structural Elements:** Color, texture and patterns will be incorporated into the design of the structural elements. This will improve the proposed project's integration within the existing man-made and natural environments.
- **Shoreline Trail:** The new bridge, the increased length of the Shoreline Trail and the viewing platform will help to enhance the connection between the trail and the Niagara River Waterfront, improving the pedestrians' visual environment, providing open views of the river and the Canadian shoreline in the background.

5.2 MAINTENANCE

How the landscape and structures within the NYGCIP are maintained has implications to the overall visual quality and will include the following strategies.

- **Roadway Maintenance:** Streetscape improvements for the adjacent roadways, including Porter Avenue, will be maintained. Structures, including ramps and bridges, will be regularly maintained as part of the City's and NYSDOT's maintenance program.
- **Landscape Maintenance:** Regular activities including mowing, weeding, and pruning will be performed on all landscape areas to promote and maintain healthy trees and shrubs. Fertilizing of trees will ensure growth and in locations where landscaping is adjacent to natural settings. Removal of invasive species will ensure native species will establish themselves in the landscape.



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6 CONCLUSIONS

The overall visual impact of the NYGCIP, according to the ratings defined in Section 4.1 (refer to Table 25), is determined to be Moderate / Average because it will result in a moderate/average change to the visual resources with moderate viewer response. Impacts can be mitigated in less than five years using the measures listed in Section 5.

Table 27: Overall Visual Quality Rating.

Key view	Existing Condition	Proposed Condition	Visual Quality Change
View 1a - Porter Avenue Looking Southwest (Roundabout Option)	2.8	3.0	+ 0.2
View 1b - Porter Avenue Looking Southwest (Intersection Option)	2.8	2.8	0
View 2 - Front Park Looking South	6.2	6.2	0
View 3 - Front Park Looking Northwest	4.0	4.0	0
View 4 - Front Park Looking East	3.8	4.0	+ 0.2
View 5 - Busti Avenue Looking West	3.5	3.8	+ 0.3
View 6 - Vermont Street Looking Southwest	2.2	2.2	0
View 7 - Shoreline Trail Looking South	3.8	2.7	- 1.2
View 8 - Southbound I-190 Looking South	2.5	2.8	+ 0.3
View 9 - Shoreline Trail Looking North	4.5	3.3	- 1.2
View 10a - Porter Avenue Looking Northeast (Roundabout Option)	3.8	4.0	+ 0.2
View 10b - Porter Avenue Looking Northeast (Intersection Option)	3.8	3.7	- 0.1
View 11 - D'Youville College Athletic Fields Looking North	3.5	3.2	- 0.3
Overall Visual Impact	3.7	3.5	- 0.2



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8 GLOSSARY

Dominance: Dominance of components or specific features in a scene may be dominant because of prominent positioning, contrast, extent, or importance of pattern elements.

Intactness: The integrity of visual order in the natural and man-built landscape, and the extent to which the landscape is free from visual encroachment.

Landscape: Landform and land cover forming a distance visual pattern. Land cover comprises water, vegetation and man-made development, including cities.

Landscape Unit: An area or volume of distinct landscape character which forms a spatially enclosed unit at ground level; it may include more than one landscape type; outdoor room. The extent of a single landscape type which is not spatially enclosed at ground level.

Regional Setting: The regional landscape establishes the general visual environment of the project, but the specific visual environment upon which this assessment will focus is determined by defining landscape units and the project viewshed.

Sight Line: The unobstructed line of sight between an observer and viewed object.

Texture: The visual or tactile surface characteristic of various elements in the landscape; often the least dominant of the four visual pattern elements.

Uniqueness: A resource-oriented criterion: a visual resource, visual character, or visual quality which is rare or uncommonly found at a regional or national scale.

Unity: The degree to which the visual resources of the landscape join together to form a coherent, harmonious visual pattern. Unity refers to the compositional harmony or inter-compatibility between landscape elements.

Viewer Activity: The extent of a viewer's ability to perceive the landscape and its detail may be heightened or decreased by the visual requirements of his current activity and his past experience of the landscape.

Viewer Awareness: A viewer's receptivity to the visual character of the landscape can be affected by elements and relationships in the landscape setting itself or by expectations about the setting. Visual experience contrary to expectation may be suppressed or heightened, depending on the degree of disagreement.

Viewer Exposure: The degree to which viewers are exposed to a view by their physical location, numbers viewing and duration of view.

Viewer Groups: Classes of viewers differentiated by their visual response to the highway and its setting; response is affected by viewer activity, awareness and values.

Viewer Response: Measures of viewer response to change in visual resources include viewer exposure, viewer sensitivity, cultural significance and local values.



Viewer Sensitivity: The viewer's variable receptivity to the elements within the environment that he is viewing, affected by viewer activity and awareness. A person cannot readily notice every object and all the attributes of the objects that compose the total visual environment.

Viewshed: A viewshed is a subset of a landscape unit and is comprised of all the surface areas visible from an observer's viewpoint. The limits of a viewshed are defined as the visual limits of the views located from the proposed project. The viewshed also includes the locations of viewers likely to be affected by visual changes brought about by project features.

View: A scene observed from a given vantage point.

Visual Character: The visual character of a landscape is formed by the order of the patterns composing it. The elements of these patterns are the form, line, color and texture of the landscapes visual resources. Their interrelationships can be objectively described in terms of dominance, diversity, and continuity.

Visual Impact: The degree of change in visual resources and viewer response to those resources caused by highway development and operations.

Visual Quality: While many factors contribute to a landscape's visual quality, they can ultimately be grouped under three headings: Vividness, Intactness and Unity.

Visual Resources: The appearance of the features that make up the visible landscape. Includes the land, water, vegetative, animal, and other features that are visible on all national resource lands. (U.S.F.S.)

Vividness: The memorability of the visual impression received from contrasting landscape elements as they combine to form a striking and distinctive visual pattern.



NEW YORK GATEWAY CONNECTIONS
IMPROVEMENT PROJECT TO THE US PEACE BRIDGE PLAZA



ATTACHMENT A

VIA WORKSHEETS





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Visual Impact Assessment Worksheet						
Project:	New York Gateway Connections Improvement Project to the US Peace Bridge Plaza				Alternative:	Proposed Action
Location:	Porter Avenue Looking Southwest (Roundabout Option)			Key View No.	1a	
Photos	Existing			Proposed		
						
	Viewer Group:	Local Residents / Travelers / Commuters / Recreational Users		Landscape Unit:	Commercial / Institutional	
	Existing		Proposed		Change	
VIVIDNESS	<p>The foreground and middleground views are dominated by Porter Avenue, roadside landscaping, and commercial buildings are typical and unmemorable. The background view of Lake Erie is obstructed by the rising Porter Avenue that crosses the I-190. The vividness rating is low.</p>		<p>The foreground and middleground views are dominated by Porter Avenue, roadside landscaping, and commercial buildings are typical and unmemorable. The background view of Lake Erie remains obstructed by the roundabout and rising Porter Avenue that crosses the I-190. The introduction of the roundabout provides a focal point in the background. The vividness rating is low.</p>		<p>Vividness rating would increase.</p>	
	VIVIDNESS RATING:	1.5	VIVIDNESS RATING:	2.5	VIVIDNESS RATING:	+1.0
INTACTNESS	<p>Porter Avenue divides the vegetation along the background. The street trees and maintained lawn along Porter Avenue provides a continuous green strip from foreground to background. The intactness rating is moderately low.</p>		<p>The roundabout further divides the vegetation along the background by increasing pavement to the north and south. The street trees and maintained lawn along Porter Avenue provides a continuous green strip from foreground to background. The intactness rating is moderately low.</p>		<p>Intactness rating would slightly decrease.</p>	
	INTACTNESS RATING:	3.0	INTACTNESS RATING:	2.5	INTACTNESS RATING:	-0.5
UNITY	<p>The street trees and grass strips along Porter Avenue visually link the foreground and background. The continuous corridor of Porter Avenue provides supportive colors, textures and materials. The lawn areas are well maintained with little visual clutter from roadside signate and utilities. The unity rating is moderate/average.</p>		<p>The street trees and grass strips along Porter Avenue visually link the foreground and background. The continuous corridor of Porter Avenue provides supportive colors, textures and materials. The lawn areas are well maintained with little visual clutter from roadside signals and utilities. The unity rating is moderate/average.</p>		<p>Unity rating would not change.</p>	
	UNITY RATING:	4.0	UNITY RATING:	4.0	UNITY RATING:	0
TOTALS	Total of Existing Ratings (V+I+U)	8.5	Total of Proposed Ratings (V+I+U)	9.0	Total of Change Ratings (V+I+U)	+0.5
	Visual Quality (V+I+U)/3	2.8	Visual Quality (V+I+U)/3	3.0	Visual Quality (V+I+U)/3	+0.2





Visual Impact Assessment Worksheet						
Project:	New York Gateway Connections Improvement Project to the US Peace Bridge Plaza				Alternative:	Proposed Action
Location:	Porter Avenue Looking Southwest (Intersection Option)			Key View No.	1b	
Photos	Existing			Proposed		
						
	Viewer Group:	Local Residents / Travelers / Commuters / Recreational Users		Landscape Unit:	Commercial / Institutional	
	Existing		Proposed		Change	
VIVIDNESS	The foreground and middleground views are dominated by Porter Avenue, roadside landscaping, and commercial buildings are typical and unmemorable. The background view of Lake Erie is obstructed by the rising Porter Avenue that crosses the I-190. The vividness rating is low.		The foreground and middleground views are dominated by Porter Avenue, roadside landscaping, and commercial buildings are typical and unmemorable. The background view of Lake Erie remains obstructed by the intersection and rising Porter Avenue that crosses the I-190. The vividness rating is low.		Vividness rating would not change.	
	VIVIDNESS RATING:	1.5	VIVIDNESS RATING:	1.5	VIVIDNESS RATING:	0
INTACTNESS	Porter Avenue divides the vegetation along the background. The street trees and maintained lawn along Porter Avenue provides a continuous green strip from foreground to background. The intactness rating is moderately low.		Porter Avenue divides the vegetation along the background. The street trees and maintained lawn along Porter Avenue provides a continuous green strip from foreground to background. The intactness rating is moderately low.		Intactness rating would not change.	
	INTACTNESS RATING:	3.0	INTACTNESS RATING:	3.0	INTACTNESS RATING:	0
UNITY	The street trees and grass strips along Porter Avenue visually link the foreground and background. The continuous corridor of Porter Avenue provides supportive colors, textures and materials. The lawn areas are well maintained with little visual clutter from roadside signage and utilities. The unity rating is moderate/average.		The street trees and grass strips along Porter Avenue visually link the foreground and background. The continuous corridor of Porter Avenue provides supportive colors, textures and materials. The lawn areas are well maintained with little visual clutter from roadside signals and utilities. The unity rating is moderate/average.		Unity rating would not change.	
	UNITY RATING:	4.0	UNITY RATING:	4.0	UNITY RATING:	0
TOTALS	Total of Existing Ratings (V+I+U)	8.5	Total of Proposed Ratings (V+I+U)	8.5	Total of Change Ratings (V+I+U)	0
	Visual Quality (V+I+U)/3	2.8	Visual Quality (V+I+U)/3	2.8	Visual Quality (V+I+U)/3	0





Visual Impact Assessment Worksheet							
Project:	New York Gateway Connections Improvement Project to the US Peace Bridge Plaza				Alternative:	Proposed Action	
Location:	Front Park Looking South				Key View No.	2	
Photos	Existing			Proposed			
							
	Viewer Group:	Recreational Users		Landscape Unit:	Recreation / Parkland		
	Existing		Proposed		Change		
VIVIDNESS	The meandering multi-use trail presents an attractive sight in the middle/backgrounds. The well maintained landscaping and mature trees provide a striking viewshed which makes it memorable. The vividness rating is high.		The meandering multi-use trail presents an attractive sight in the middle/backgrounds. The well maintained landscaping and mature trees provide a striking viewshed which makes it memorable. The vividness rating is high.		Vividness rating would not change.		
	VIVIDNESS RATING:	5.5	VIVIDNESS RATING:	5.5	VIVIDNESS RATING:	0	
INTACTNESS	The landscaping is intact except for the minor gap off to the right in the middleground. The landscaping is also contextually linked from the foreground to the background by the meandering multi-use trail. Minimal man-made features dot the landscape providing a more naturalized viewshed. The intactness rating is very high.		The landscaping is intact except for the minor gap off to the right in the middleground. The landscaping is also contextually linked from the foreground to the background by the meandering multi-use trail. Minimal man-made features dot the landscape providing a more naturalized viewshed. The intactness rating is very high.		Intactness rating would not change.		
	INTACTNESS RATING:	6.5	INTACTNESS RATING:	6.5	INTACTNESS RATING:	0	
UNITY	The lawn and landscaping are well maintained. The landscape palette of colors, textures and forms provides a harmonious natural viewshed. The absence of man-made features strengthens the natural forms of the landscape. The unity rating is very high.		The lawn and landscaping are well maintained. The landscape palette of colors, textures and forms provides a harmonious natural viewshed. The absence of man-made features strengthens the natural forms of the landscape. The unity rating is very high.		Unity rating would not change.		
	UNITY RATING:	6.5	UNITY RATING:	6.5	UNITY RATING:	0	
TOTALS	Total of Existing Ratings (V+I+U)	18.5	Total of Proposed Ratings (V+I+U)	18.5	Total of Change Ratings (V+I+U)	0	
	Visual Quality (V+I+U)/3	6.2	Visual Quality (V+I+U)/3	6.2	Visual Quality (V+I+U)/3	0	





Visual Impact Assessment Worksheet						
Project:	New York Gateway Connections Improvement Project to the US Peace Bridge Plaza				Alternative:	Proposed Action
Location:	Front Park Looking Northwest			Key View No.	3	
Photos	Existing			Proposed		
						
Viewer Group:		Recreational Users		Landscape Unit:		Recreation / Parkland
	Existing		Proposed		Change	
VIVIDNESS	The view is dominated by the mass of evergreens in the middleground and manicured hedge in the foreground. These elements are typical and provide little to the visual distinctiveness of the landscape which makes it unmemorable. The vividness rating is moderate/average.		The view is dominated by the mass of evergreens in the middleground and manicured hedge in the foreground. These elements are typical and provide little to the visual distinctiveness of the landscape which makes it unmemorable. The vividness rating is moderate/average.		Vividness rating would not change.	
	VIVIDNESS RATING:	4.0	VIVIDNESS RATING:	4.0	VIVIDNESS RATING:	0
INTACTNESS	While the landscaping is intact the man-made features of Ramp A and the chain-link fence subtract from the natural environment. The visual integrity is provided by the longitudinal patterns of the hedge, evergreen trees and Ramp A. The intactness rating is moderate/average.		While the landscaping is intact, the man-made features of Ramp A, including the widening, and the chain-link fence subtract from the natural environment. The visual integrity is provided by the longitudinal patterns of the hedge, evergreen trees and Ramp A. The intactness rating is moderate/average.		Intactness rating would not change.	
	INTACTNESS RATING:	3.5	INTACTNESS RATING:	3.5	INTACTNESS RATING:	0
UNITY	The forms of the hedge, evergreens and Ramp A combine to form a cohesive visual pattern between the man-made and natural features. However, the mass of evergreens obscures the background that subtracts from overall unity of the viewshed. The unity rating is moderately high.		The forms of the hedge, evergreens and Ramp A combine to form a cohesive visual pattern between the man-made and natural features. However, the mass of evergreens obscures the background that subtracts from overall unity of the viewshed. The unity rating is moderately high.		Unity rating would not change.	
	UNITY RATING:	4.5	UNITY RATING:	4.5	UNITY RATING:	0
TOTALS	Total of Existing Ratings (V+I+U)	12.0	Total of Proposed Ratings (V+I+U)	12.0	Total of Change Ratings (V+I+U)	0
	Visual Quality (V+I+U)/3	4.0	Visual Quality (V+I+U)/3	4.0	Visual Quality (V+I+U)/3	0





Visual Impact Assessment Worksheet						
Project:	New York Gateway Connections Improvement Project to the US Peace Bridge Plaza				Alternative:	Proposed Action
Location:	Front Park Looking East			Key View No.	4	
Photos	Existing			Proposed		
						
	Viewer Group:	Recreational Users		Landscape Unit:	Recreation / Parkland	
	Existing		Proposed		Change	
VIVIDNESS	The view is dominated by the pavement of the terrace in the foreground and the open lawn of the middleground which contain no unique or memorable elements. The minor trees in the middleground and the landscaping off in the distance is typical and is not visually striking. The vividness rating is low.		The view is dominated by the pavement of the terrace in the foreground and the open lawn of the middleground which contain no unique or memorable elements. The minor trees in the middleground and the landscaping off in the distance is typical and is not visually striking. The vividness rating is low.		Vividness rating would not change.	
	VIVIDNESS RATING:	1.5	VIVIDNESS RATING:	1.5	VIVIDNESS RATING:	0
INTACTNESS	There is a strong visual order with the pavement in the foreground, open lawn in the middleground and the landscaping in the background. The minor trees and Plaza access does little to subtract from this order. Minimal man-made features dot the landscape providing a more naturalized viewshed. The intactness rating is high.		There is a strong visual order with the pavement in the foreground, open lawn in the middleground and the landscaping in the background. The minor trees do little to subtract from this order, while the removal of man-made features, including Baird Drive, strengthens the open lawn area. The intactness rating is high.		Intactness rating would slightly increase.	
	INTACTNESS RATING:	6.0	INTACTNESS RATING:	6.5	INTACTNESS RATING:	+0.5
UNITY	The linear forms of the pavement, open lawn and landscaping in the background create a cohesive visual pattern between the man-made and natural features. However, the contrasting colors and textures between the pavement and landscaping provides no integration of the man-made development with the natural setting. The unity rating is moderate/average.		The linear forms of the pavement, open lawn and landscaping in the background create a cohesive visual pattern between the man-made and natural features. However, the contrasting colors and textures between the pavement and landscaping provides no integration of the man-made development with the natural setting. The unity rating is moderate/average.		Unity rating would not change.	
	UNITY RATING:	4.0	UNITY RATING:	4.0	UNITY RATING:	0
TOTALS	Total of Existing Ratings (V+I+U)	11.5	Total of Proposed Ratings (V+I+U)	12.0	Total of Change Ratings (V+I+U)	+0.5
	Visual Quality (V+I+U)/3	3.8	Visual Quality (V+I+U)/3	4.0	Visual Quality (V+I+U)/3	+0.2



Visual Impact Assessment Worksheet						
Project:	New York Gateway Connections Improvement Project to the US Peace Bridge Plaza				Alternative:	Proposed Action
Location:	Busti Avenue Looking West				Key View No.	5
Photos	Existing		Proposed			
						
	Viewer Group:	Local Residents		Landscape Unit:	Urban Residential	
	Existing		Proposed		Change	
VIVIDNESS	The view is dominated by Busti Avenue and the park's open lawn which contain no unique or memorable elements. The striking view of Lake Erie is obscured by the vegetation and plaza subtracting from the water's relation to the landscape. The vividness rating is low.		The view is dominated by Busti Avenue and the park's open lawn which contain no unique or memorable elements. The striking view of Lake Erie is obscured by the vegetation and plaza subtracting from the water's relation to the landscape. The vividness rating is low.		Vividness rating would not change.	
	VIVIDNESS RATING:	2.0	VIVIDNESS RATING:	2.0	VIVIDNESS RATING:	0
INTACTNESS	There is a strong visual order with the pavement in the foreground, open lawn in the middleground and the landscaping in the background. The minor trees and plaza access does little to subtract from this order. Few man-made features dot the landscape providing a more naturalized viewshed. The intactness rating is moderately high.		There is a strong visual order with the pavement in the foreground, open lawn in the middleground and the landscaping in the background. The minor trees do little to subtract from this order, while the removal of man-made features, including Baird Drive, strengthens the open lawn area. Few man-made features dot the landscape providing a more naturalized viewshed. The intactness rating is high.		Intactness rating would slightly increase.	
	INTACTNESS RATING:	5.0	INTACTNESS RATING:	5.5	INTACTNESS RATING:	+0.5
UNITY	The linear forms of the pavement, open lawn and landscaping in the background create a cohesive visual pattern between the man-made and natural features. The contrasting colors and textures between the pavement and landscaping provides no integration of the man-made development with the natural setting. There is no strong connection to the water. The unity rating is moderately low.		The linear forms of the pavement, open lawn and landscaping in the background create a cohesive visual pattern between the man-made and natural features. The contrasting colors and textures between the pavement and landscaping provides no integration of the man-made development with the natural setting. There is no strong connection to the water. The unity rating is moderate/average.		Unity rating would slightly increase.	
	UNITY RATING:	3.5	UNITY RATING:	4.0	UNITY RATING:	+0.5
TOTALS	Total of Existing Ratings (V+I+U)	10.5	Total of Proposed Ratings (V+I+U)	11.5	Total of Change Ratings (V+I+U)	1.0
	Visual Quality (V+I+U)/3	3.5	Visual Quality (V+I+U)/3	3.8	Visual Quality (V+I+U)/3	0.3





Visual Impact Assessment Worksheet							
Project:	New York Gateway Connections Improvement Project to the US Peace Bridge Plaza				Alternative:	Proposed Action	
Location:	Vermont Street Looking Southwest				Key View No.	6	
Photos	Existing			Proposed			
							
	Viewer Group:	Local Residents / Business Employees		Landscape Unit:	Urban Residential		
	Existing		Proposed		Change		
VIVIDNESS	The lining of street trees manipulate the view focusing on the plaza's gated entrance and facility which is not unique or memorable. Man-made elements are scattered throughout the view providing too many contrasting elements. The vividness rating is low.		The lining of street trees manipulate the view focusing on the Plaza's gated entrance and facility which is not unique or memorable. Man-made elements are scattered throughout the view providing too many contrasting elements. The vividness rating is low.		Vividness rating would not change.		
	VIVIDNESS RATING:	1.5	VIVIDNESS RATING:	1.5	VIVIDNESS RATING:	0	
INTACTNESS	The two story residences with the street trees present a fairly intact view of an urban residential street. The varying architectural styles, materials, colors and textures is typical for this type of neighborhood. Utility poles and overhead wires encroach on the residential street image. The intactness rating is low.		The two story residences with the street trees present a fairly intact view of an urban residential street. The varying architectural styles, materials, colors and textures is typical for this type of neighborhood. Utility poles and overhead wires encroach on the residential street image. The intactness rating is low.		Intactness rating would not change.		
	INTACTNESS RATING:	2.5	INTACTNESS RATING:	2.5	INTACTNESS RATING:	0	
UNITY	Street details, including pavement, sidewalks, planting area and lawn, are well defined and maintained. The utility poles and overhead wires degrade the overall harmony of the view. The unity rating is low.		Street details, including pavement, sidewalks, planting area and lawn, are well defined and maintained. The utility poles and overhead wires degrade the overall harmony of the view. The unity rating is low.		Unity rating would not change.		
	UNITY RATING:	2.5	UNITY RATING:	2.5	UNITY RATING:	0	
TOTALS	Total of Existing Ratings (V+I+U)	6.5	Total of Proposed Ratings (V+I+U)	6.5	Total of Change Ratings (V+I+U)	0	
	Visual Quality (V+I+U)/3	2.2	Visual Quality (V+I+U)/3	2.2	Visual Quality (V+I+U)/3	0	





Visual Impact Assessment Worksheet						
Project:	New York Gateway Connections Improvement Project to the US Peace Bridge Plaza				Alternative:	Proposed Action
Location:	Shoreline Trail Looking South			Key View No.	7	
Photos	Existing			Proposed		
Viewer Group:		Local Residents / Business Employees / Travelers / Commuters		Landscape Unit:	Transportation Corridors	
	Existing		Proposed		Change	
VIVIDNESS	The open view of Lake Erie provides a unique element and draws the attention away from the roadway's elements. The vegetation and water provides some color and texture to the viewshed. The vividness rating is moderate/average.		The elimination of the open view of Lake Erie reduces this unique element and refocuses on the roadway structural and utility elements making this view unmemorable. The vegetation and water provides some color and texture to the viewshed. The vividness rating is moderate/average.		Vividness rating would decrease.	
	VIVIDNESS RATING:	4.5	VIVIDNESS RATING:	3.5	VIVIDNESS RATING:	-1.0
INTACTNESS	The vegetation along the Shoreline Trail obscures the visual connection to the distant water of Lake Erie, and the roadway's pavement and water present conflicting landscape characters. The lack of maintenance along the Shoreline Trail degrades the visual integrity of the landscape. The intactness rating is moderately low.		The vegetation and pedestrian bridge obscures the visual connection to the distant water of Lake Erie, and the roadway's pavement and water present conflicting landscape characters. Man-made elements are scattered throughout the view providing too many contrasting elements. The intactness rating is moderately low.		Intactness rating would decrease.	
	INTACTNESS RATING:	3.5	INTACTNESS RATING:	3.0	INTACTNESS RATING:	-0.5
UNITY	The lack of a visual connection between the water and the roadways creates little harmony between the man-made and natural elements. The linear wall and the vegetation screen do little to integrate the man-made features with the landscape. The unity rating is moderately low.		The lack of a visual connection between the water and the roadways creates little harmony between the man-made and natural elements. The linear wall and the vegetation screen do little to integrate the man-made features with the landscape. The unity rating is moderately low.		Unity rating would not change.	
	UNITY RATING:	2.5	UNITY RATING:	2.5	UNITY RATING:	0
TOTALS	Total of Existing Ratings (V+I+U)	10.5	Total of Proposed Ratings (V+I+U)	9.0	Total of Change Ratings (V+I+U)	-1.5
	Visual Quality (V+I+U)/3	3.5	Visual Quality (V+I+U)/3	3.0	Visual Quality (V+I+U)/3	-0.5





Visual Impact Assessment Worksheet							
Project:	New York Gateway Connections Improvement Project to the US Peace Bridge Plaza				Alternative:	Proposed Action	
Location:	Southbound I-190 Looking South				Key View No.	8	
Photos	Existing			Proposed			
							
	Viewer Group:	Business Employees / Travelers / Commuters		Landscape Unit:	Transportation Corridors		
	Existing		Proposed		Change		
VIVIDNESS	<p>The highway pavement with vegetation to the east and west is not unusual making this view unmemorable. Man-made elements are scattered throughout the view providing too many contrasting elements. The vividness rating is low.</p>		<p>The view of the pedestrian bridge crossing the viewshed provides a unique element within a typical highway viewshed. Man-made elements are scattered throughout the view providing too many contrasting elements. The vividness rating is moderate/average.</p>		<p>Vividness rating would increase.</p>		
	VIVIDNESS RATING:	2.5	VIVIDNESS RATING:	3.5	VIVIDNESS RATING:	+1.0	
INTACTNESS	<p>The trees and shrubs along the east partially screen views of Ramp S and the pedestrian bridge. However, the highway disrupts the connection between the natural setting to the west and the one to the east, thus creating conflicting landscape characters. The intactness rating is low.</p>		<p>The pedestrian bridge and highway disrupt the connection between the natural settings on the east and west, with the bridge almost eliminating the vegetation on the west. The intactness rating is low.</p>		<p>Intactness rating would decrease.</p>		
	INTACTNESS RATING:	2.5	INTACTNESS RATING:	1.5	INTACTNESS RATING:	-1.0	
UNITY	<p>Minimal vegetation with the highway in the middle degrades the natural setting creating little harmony between the man-made and natural elements. The vegetation and highway's contrasting colors and textures provide little integration of the man-made elements with its surrounding landscape. The unity rating is moderately low.</p>		<p>The various highway features and minimal vegetation provides little harmony between the man-made features and the natural elements. However, the similar color and simple textures of the pedestrian bridge provides some unity within the man-made features. The unity rating is moderately low.</p>		<p>Unity rating would increase.</p>		
	UNITY RATING:	2.5	UNITY RATING:	3.5	UNITY RATING:	+1.0	
TOTALS	Total of Existing Ratings (V+I+U)	7.5	Total of Proposed Ratings (V+I+U)	8.5	Total of Change Ratings (V+I+U)	+1.0	
	Visual Quality (V+I+U)/3	2.5	Visual Quality (V+I+U)/3	2.8	Visual Quality (V+I+U)/3	+0.3	



Visual Impact Assessment Worksheet						
Project:	New York Gateway Connections Improvement Project to the US Peace Bridge Plaza				Alternative:	Proposed Action
Location:	Shoreline Trail Looking North			Key View No.	9	
Photos	Existing		Proposed			
						
	Viewer Group:	Recreational Users		Landscape Unit:	River / Waterfront	
	Existing		Proposed		Change	
VIVIDNESS	The view along the Shoreline Trail presents an attractive view of the Peace Bridge in the distance. In addition, the overgrown vegetation in the foreground and middleground provides varying texture and color making the view memorable. The vividness rating is high.		The view along the Shoreline Trail presents an attractive view of the Peace Bridge in the distance. The introduction of the pedestrian bridge and ramp reduces the overall impact from the varying texture and color from the overgrown vegetation in the foreground and middleground. The vividness rating is high.		Vividness rating slightly decrease.	
	VIVIDNESS RATING:	6.5	VIVIDNESS RATING:	6.0	VIVIDNESS RATING:	-0.5
INTACTNESS	The Peace Bridge structure encroaches on the mainly natural landscape within the viewshed drawing ones focus away from the landscape and onto the man-made structure. The chain-link fence within the vegetation competes with the natural form, colors and texture of the landscape. The intactness rating is low.		The Peace Bridge structure and the pedestrian bridge and ramp encroaches on the mainly natural landscape within the viewshed drawing ones focus away from the landscape and onto the man-made structures. The chain-link fence within the vegetation competes with the natural form, colors and texture of the landscape. The intactness rating is low.		Intactness rating decrease.	
	INTACTNESS RATING:	2.5	INTACTNESS RATING:	1.5	INTACTNESS RATING:	-1.0
UNITY	Except for the bridge in the background, the natural vegetation blends with the man-made structures of the I-190 underpass and chain-link fence. The curve at the end of the Shoreline Trail ties the man-made structure with the surrounding landscape creating a unity between the natural and man-made elements. The unity rating is moderately high.		The pedestrian bridge and ramp plus the Peace Bridge in the background, reduces the unity between the natural vegetation and man-made structures. The Shoreline Trail's ramp disrupts the natural vegetation along the shoreline, reducing the overall unity of the natural landscape. The unity rating is moderately low.		Unity rating would decrease.	
	UNITY RATING:	4.5	UNITY RATING:	2.5	UNITY RATING:	-2.0
TOTALS	Total of Existing Ratings (V+I+U)	13.5	Total of Proposed Ratings (V+I+U)	10.0	Total of Change Ratings (V+I+U)	-3.5
	Visual Quality (V+I+U)/3	4.5	Visual Quality (V+I+U)/3	3.3	Visual Quality (V+I+U)/3	-1.2





Visual Impact Assessment Worksheet						
Project:	New York Gateway Connections Improvement Project to the US Peace Bridge Plaza				Alternative:	Proposed Action
Location:	Porter Avenue Looking Northeast (Roundabout Option)			Key View No.	10a	
Photos	Existing			Proposed		
						
	Viewer Group:	Local Residents / Business Employees / Travelers / Commuters / Recreational Users		Landscape Unit:	Transportation Corridors	
	Existing		Proposed		Change	
VIVIDNESS	<p>The foreground and middleground views are dominated by Porter Avenue and roadside elements, including street trees, which are typical and unmemorable. The commercial buildings in the background are partially obscured by the vegetation. The vividness rating is low.</p>		<p>The foreground and middleground views are dominated by the roundabout, which is a unique element within the viewshed. The lack of a focal element within the roundabout provides a more typical streetscape and is unmemorable. The commercial buildings in the background are partially obscured by the vegetation. The vividness rating is moderate/average.</p>		<p>Vividness rating would increase.</p>	
	VIVIDNESS RATING:	2.5	VIVIDNESS RATING:	3.5	VIVIDNESS RATING:	+1.0
INTACTNESS	<p>Porter Avenue and its street trees provides visual continuity from foreground to the background. Porter Avenue's roadside elements, such as the brick edging, sidewalks, street trees and maintained lawn areas provide visual order. The intactness rating is moderate/average.</p>		<p>The roundabout disrupts Porter Avenue and its street trees reducing the visual continuity from foreground to background. However, the roadside elements, such as sidewalks, street trees and maintained lawn areas provide visual order. The intactness rating is moderate/average.</p>		<p>Intactness rating would slightly decrease.</p>	
	INTACTNESS RATING:	4.0	INTACTNESS RATING:	3.5	INTACTNESS RATING:	-0.5
UNITY	<p>The colors, textures and patterns of the roadside elements unify the man-made elements. The addition of the natural landscape creates a coherent visual pattern. The unity rating is moderately high.</p>		<p>The colors, textures and patterns of the roadside elements unify the man-made elements. The addition of the natural landscape creates a coherent visual pattern. The unity rating is moderately high.</p>		<p>Unity rating would not change.</p>	
	UNITY RATING:	5.0	UNITY RATING:	5.0	UNITY RATING:	0
TOTALS	Total of Existing Ratings (V+I+U)	11.5	Total of Proposed Ratings (V+I+U)	12.0	Total of Change Ratings (V+I+U)	+0.5
	Visual Quality (V+I+U)/3	3.8	Visual Quality (V+I+U)/3	4.0	Visual Quality (V+I+U)/3	+0.2



Visual Impact Assessment Worksheet						
Project:	New York Gateway Connections Improvement Project to the US Peace Bridge Plaza				Alternative:	Proposed Action
Location:	Porter Avenue Looking Northeast (Intersection Option)			Key View No.	10b	
Photos	Existing			Proposed		
	Viewer Group:	Local Residents / Business Employees / Travelers / Commuters / Recreational Users		Landscape Unit:	Transportation Corridors	
	Existing		Proposed		Change	
VIVIDNESS	<p>The foreground and middleground views are dominated by Porter Avenue and roadside elements, including street trees, which are typical and unmemorable. The commercial buildings in the background are partially obscured by the vegetation. The vividness rating is low.</p>		<p>The foreground view is dominated by the intersection, which is typical and unmemorable. The lack of a focal element within the viewshed provides a more typical streetscape and is unmemorable. The commercial buildings in the background are partially obscured by the vegetation. The vividness rating is low.</p>		<p>Vividness rating would not change.</p>	
	VIVIDNESS RATING:	2.5	VIVIDNESS RATING:	2.5	VIVIDNESS RATING:	0
INTACTNESS	<p>Porter Avenue and its street trees provides visual continuity from foreground to the background. Porter Avenue's roadside elements, such as the brick edging, sidewalks, street trees and maintained lawn areas provide visual order. The intactness rating is moderate/average.</p>		<p>The intersection disrupts Porter Avenue reducing the visual continuity from foreground to background. However, the roadside elements, such as sidewalks, street trees and maintained lawn areas provide visual order. The intactness rating is moderate/average.</p>		<p>Intactness rating would slightly decrease.</p>	
	INTACTNESS RATING:	4.0	INTACTNESS RATING:	3.5	INTACTNESS RATING:	-0.5
UNITY	<p>The colors, textures and patterns of the roadside elements unify the man-made elements. The addition of the natural landscape creates a coherent visual pattern. The unity rating is moderately high.</p>		<p>The colors, textures and patterns of the roadside elements unify the man-made elements. The addition of the natural landscape creates a coherent visual pattern. The unity rating is moderately high.</p>		<p>Unity rating would not change.</p>	
	UNITY RATING:	5.0	UNITY RATING:	5.0	UNITY RATING:	0
TOTALS	Total of Existing Ratings (V+I+U)	11.5	Total of Proposed Ratings (V+I+U)	11.0	Total of Change Ratings (V+I+U)	-0.5
	Visual Quality (V+I+U)/3	3.8	Visual Quality (V+I+U)/3	3.7	Visual Quality (V+I+U)/3	-0.1



Visual Impact Assessment Worksheet							
Project:	New York Gateway Connections Improvement Project to the US Peace Bridge Plaza				Alternative:	Proposed Action	
Location:	D'Youville College Athletic Fields Looking North				Key View No.	11	
Photos	Existing			Proposed			
							
	Viewer Group:	Local Residents / Recreational Users		Landscape Unit:	Transportation Corridors		
	Existing		Proposed		Change		
VIVIDNESS	The open lawn in the foreground dominates the view and does not contain any unique or memorable elements. Porter Avenue in the middleground, with its utility and streetscape elements are typical and unmemorable. The vividness rating is low.		The open lawn in the foreground dominates the view and does not contain any unique or memorable elements. The Porter Avenue roundabout in the middleground, with its utility and streetscape elements, are typical and unmemorable. The vividness rating is low.		Vividness rating would not change.		
	VIVIDNESS RATING:	2.5	VIVIDNESS RATING:	2.5	VIVIDNESS RATING:	0	
INTACTNESS	Except for Ramp P in the background, the wooded middleground and background is mainly intact. In addition, Porter Avenue does little to disrupt the visual relationship between the open lawn and wooded background. The utility and streetscape vertical elements partially disrupts the natural setting of the viewshed. The intactness rating is moderately high.		Except for roundabout's retaining wall in the middleground, the vegetation in the middleground and background is mainly intact. In addition, the roundabout does little to disrupt the visual relationship between the open lawn and wooded background. The utility and streetscape vertical elements partially disrupts the natural setting of the viewshed. The intactness rating is moderate/average.		Intactness rating would slightly decrease.		
	INTACTNESS RATING:	4.5	INTACTNESS RATING:	4.0	INTACTNESS RATING:	-0.5	
UNITY	The wooded areas in the background are somewhat visually integrated with the open lawn in the foreground, providing a predominantly natural environment. The minimal utility poles with overhead wires and street lights does little to visually disrupt the viewshed. The unity rating is moderate/average.		The wooded areas in the background are somewhat visually integrated with the open lawn in the foreground, providing a predominantly natural environment. The retaining wall, minimal utility poles with overhead wires and street lights do little to visually disrupt the viewshed. The unity rating is moderately low.		Unity rating would slightly decrease.		
	UNITY RATING:	3.5	UNITY RATING:	3.0	UNITY RATING:	-0.5	
TOTALS	Total of Existing Ratings (V+I+U)	10.5	Total of Proposed Ratings (V+I+U)	9.5	Total of Change Ratings (V+I+U)	-1.0	
	Visual Quality (V+I+U)/3	3.5	Visual Quality (V+I+U)/3	3.2	Visual Quality (V+I+U)/3	-0.3	



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NEW YORK GATEWAY CONNECTIONS
IMPROVEMENT PROJECT TO THE US PEACE BRIDGE PLAZA

ATTACHMENT B

FIELD VISIT PHOTOGRAPHS



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